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THE LIFE OF
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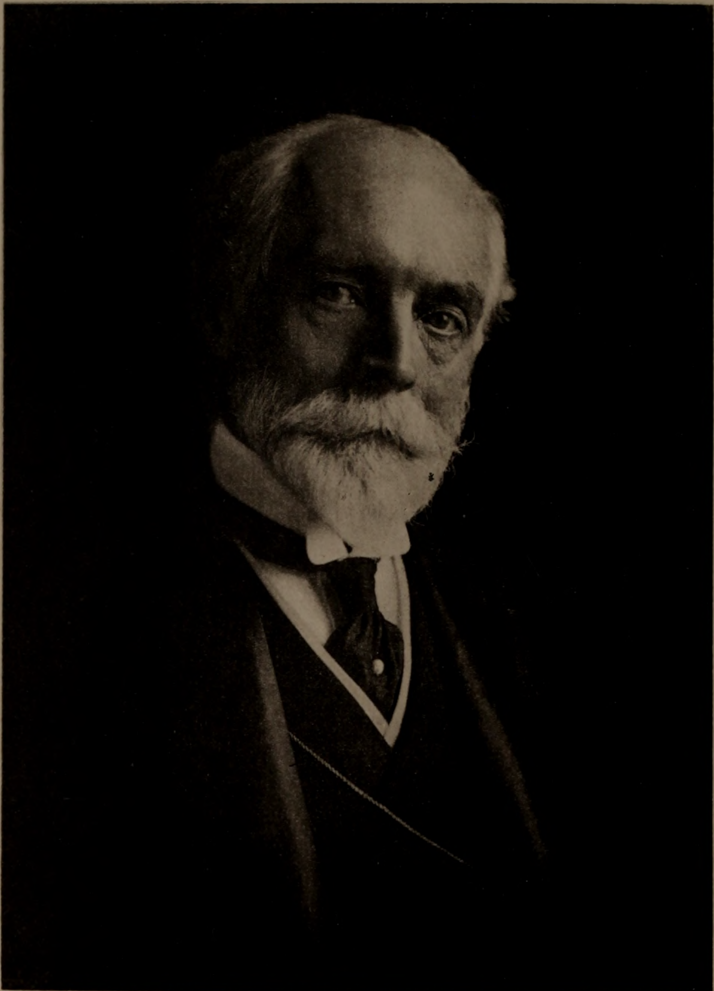

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Whitelaw Reid.

THE LIFE OF
WHITELAW REID

BY
ROYAL CORTISSOZ

VOLUME I

JOURNALISM — WAR — POLITICS

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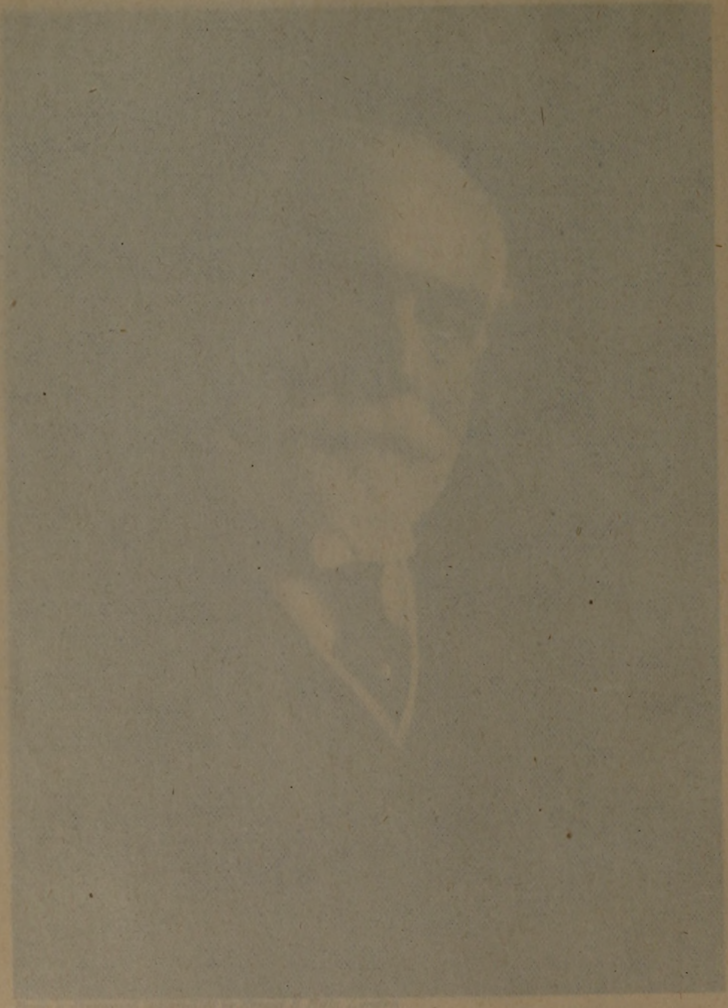
vol. 1

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1921



THE LIFE OF
WHITELAW REID

BY

ROYAL CORTISSOZ

VOLUME I

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Published March, 1921

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INTRODUCTION

In 1889, when Whitelaw Reid was living in Paris, as minister to France, John Hay asked him why he didn't do what his predecessor, Benjamin Franklin, had done at Passy—write his memoirs. Twenty years later, during his service in London as ambassador to England, Henry Adams repeatedly asked him the same question, pressing it upon him as a duty. "No one else survives of our time," he said, "who has enough skill to tell his own story." Reid admitted that there occasionally came over him the desire to make memoranda for the work persistently demanded in his private circle and regularly, for years, proposed to him by publishers. "But," he said, "it is always so much easier, in such things, to put it off to a more convenient season." I frequently brought the subject up with him, in talk and in letters, and in 1908 he wrote to me from London: "It has kept coming up constantly in conversations with all sorts of people, English and American, until the idea has become a sort of obsession. I can't do it here; and the oftener the notion is presented, the less agreeable it seems—the kind of thing one feels he ought to do, but hates to begin, and so comes to hate thinking about. But it serves to remind me that when I am relieved from my present duties I can still find something to occupy myself with, if I have energy enough." His death in 1912, while he was still busy as ambassador, put an end to the hopes of the reminiscences so long pleaded for by his friends.

Those hopes had been excited by the light which his conversation often threw upon the stores of a peculiarly rich experience. Born in 1837, his life embraced some of the most momentous years in the history of the United States, and the nature of his profession brought him into close contact with the men and events of his time. As a young man he witnessed the outbreak of the Civil War; as a correspondent in the field he described some of its crucial passages; travel in the South and residence there as a cotton-planter initiated him into the problems of reconstruction which he continued to observe through the years that developed their solution, and for a generation he was intimately associated with the work of the Republican party in its great task of healing the wounds of conflict and re-establishing the prosperity of the nation. As an editor he shared in the golden years of American journalism, the years of Greeley, Dana, Watterson, and their fellows. Beginning in diplomacy as minister to France, he returned to Paris in 1898 as a member of the commission which signed our treaty of peace with Spain, and he rounded out his work in this branch of the public service with more than seven years in England. It was a long life, and Whitelaw Reid had a good memory. Imagination rests with deep regret upon the thought of all the historical truth, the ripe judgments, and the picturesque anecdotes which he could have poured into an autobiography.

I am aware of the inadequacy of the present volumes as a substitute for the book which he might himself have written, and it seems fitting that I should indicate the method through which I have endeavored to execute a difficult task. If long years of friendship and professional association with Whitelaw Reid have supplied me with any guiding principle as his biographer, they have left me with a conviction of his solicitude for the careful statement of fact. The word "record" comes back to me as having an important status in his vocabulary. He used to say to G. W. Smalley that he would like the record of his life and work as an editor to be as complete as it could be made. When occasion arose to correct in print some errors that had been made in the history of his relations with The Tribune, the title of the editorial was characteristically fixed—"To Keep the Record Straight." I have sought to frame a record of his career.

Before beginning to write it I asked the counsel of Henry Adams, and he placed emphasis upon the value of a precise chronicle of Reid's achievements in journalism and diplomacy. In the body of my book I have stated this old friend's high appreciation of Reid's political influence. "Trace it in The Tribune and in your documents," he advised me, "and record the facts." When I spoke of their elusiveness in the intricate labyrinth of political history, he laughed and said: "Do as I did in my life of Gallatin. Shove in a letter." It is, of course, one of the helpfulest of expedients. Reid himself knew the weight of the evidence lying in a letter. It was a trait of his to preserve his correspondence with the utmost care. I have had unrestricted access to this, and my effort has been to exhibit the relations between Reid and his contemporaries, so far as possible, in their own words.

Apropos of these questions of biography, I may note here that Reid was deeply impressed by certain remarks on the subject made to him at Oxford by Lord Curzon. The chancellor said he was convinced that the public never had a truthful conception of the character of any public man, and never got an accurate knowledge of any important series of transactions in which he was concerned. His point was not exactly that people blamed too much, or even that they praised too much, but simply that they never knew public men for what they really were, and never got an exact idea of what they really did. The latter part of this assertion he explained by saying that often the reasons for an action could not be explained at the time, or even the sequence of different actions; that documents which would put them in their proper light and order had to be suppressed in the interests of other people or other countries.

In a record, then, based on painstaking research, I have been content to embody what I hope is a truthful conception of a character and a career. The art of biography risks the sacrifice of something of its essential aim when it deviates from disinterested portraiture into exposition of the biographer's idea of his subject. Reid used to call the vetoes of President Hayes "pistol-shots," admiring the swiftness with which they went straight to the mark. An editor's opinions are his pistol-shots, his contributions to the political warfare of his time, like the deeds of the man of action. Accordingly, I have been at pains to illustrate in these volumes Reid's opinions, to show exactly what they were upon such subjects as Southern reconstruction, the resumption of specie payment, the disputed election of 1876, the tariff, or the Spanish-American War. I have cited them as they were brought out by salient figures in our political life, such as Grant, Blaine, or Cleveland. In diplomacy I have followed the same method. Some of the subjects touched upon in this book are still controversial. I have not attempted to sum them up. My aim has been simply to show from documentary sources what Whitelaw Reid thought and did, and, in so showing, to make plain the man that he was.

ROYAL CORTISSOZ.

New York, February 10, 1921.

THE LIFE OF
WHITELAW REID

THE LIFE OF WHITELAW REID

CHAPTER I

ANCESTRY AND EARLY YEARS

Whitelaw Reid was born at Xenia, Ohio, on October 27th, 1837. He was born into a memorable period, one full of events indicative of the passing of an old order of things. The irrepressible conflict was rising in this country. In his youth he was destined to watch the rapid growth of the movement against slavery, and in his early manhood to witness and describe some of the crucial battles fought on that issue. Europe was everywhere still feeling its way toward a readjustment of its economic and political affairs, after the long dislocations of the Napoleonic wars. England, in the year of Whitelaw Reid's birth, was celebrating the accession of Victoria, to whom, on the occasion of her jubilee, in 1897, he was to convey, as special ambassador, the congratulations of the United States. He came into a portentously busy world. But the most significant episode in it for him, when he was a child, was so prosaic a matter as the building of a railroad hardly more than eighty miles in length. This was the Little Miami, which ran from Cincinnati to Springfield, taking Xenia by the way, at about the middle of its course, and for which ground was first broken in 1841. Far more than any political development, it symbolized the changes in American life which were to determine the evolution of his career.

It has been said of the region stretching from the Alleghanies to the Mississippi, that it was in the early thirties "one vast incubator for railroad schemes," which is but another way of saying that the West was then emerging from the rude civilization of the pioneers. Men and women still in their prime at that time had emigrated thither from New England and the South in wagons—and had done a lot of walking beside them, for the roads were perilously rough, when there were roads at all, and vehicles loaded with household impedimenta provided scant room for passengers and had to be coaxed over unnumbered obstacles. Margaret Dwight, a kinswoman of President Dwight of Yale, whose journal of "A Journey to Ohio in 1810" offers some vivid pictures of the highway in that primitive epoch, has a telling passage on the "rest" available to the traveller. Writing as she is just about to cross from Pennsylvania into Ohio, she says:

> We set out in the rain on Monday, & come on 13 miles—to a hut—with a sign up call'd a tavern—& such a place.—I found the people belong'd to a very ancient & noble family—They were first and second cousins to his Satanic Majesty. . . . Their dwelling resembles that of their royal cousin—for it is very dark & gloomy & only lighted by a great fire. . . . The house had only one room in it. There was a number of travellers & we got but one bed—that was straw or something harder. The pillow case had been on 5 or 6 years I reckon. . . . We are within 40 miles of Warren [her destination] & to be unable to get there under 4 or 5 days, is perfectly tantalizing.

On both sides of the house Whitelaw Reid's forefathers were accustomed to being thus tantalized. His father, Robert Charlton Reid, and his mother, Marion Whitelaw Ronalds, had themselves been inured to the hardships of life in crudely developed regions and touched hands with the colonial types of the late eighteenth century. Their parents were amongst the men who came here from Great Britain, not to settle in the comfortable seaboard towns, but to build their homes in what was then virtually the wilderness.

John Reid, the first of the name to appear in the record, was a man of Scotch Covenanter origin, who established himself on a little freehold that he owned near Cookestown, County Tyrone, in Ireland. He had no mind to emigrate. He was fairly prosperous and left a family of two sons and several daughters. His elder son, named for him, was the inheritor of the bulk of his property. The exact date of this second John Reid's coming to America is unrecorded, but it must have been when he was well on in years, for he was accompanied by a son old enough to buy on his own account a farm in Indiana. John Reid was drowned in the Great Miami, somewhere below Dayton, about 1812. The future of the family rested chiefly in the hands of his brother James, who had come over at the same time. James Reid, born in 1752, grew up near Cookestown, and there he was married to Nancy, the daughter of a neighboring farmer, Robert Charlton. I must cite a souvenir of the latter, invaluable in its foreshadowing of the atmosphere in which Whitelaw Reid was to be reared. It is a ragged, faded old paper, a "Letter of Dismissal" such as the good church member was wont to receive from his pastor on moving from one parish to another. This is signed by one William Dudgen, is dated 1795, and runs as follows:

> We do This Certifie, that the bearer Robert Charlton and all his family did live in Tullaughhurmey in the parish of Drumra, near to Omagh in the County Tyrone in Ireland, scince they were born untill the present date hereof. And always beheaved themselves Both Carefull and Honest with an on spotted charracter and always lived in the fear of God, and was bred up to the Church of Scotland from their Infancy and is now Bound for some of his Majesties plantations in America.

The Reids were all like that—rigid in the faith. For their hard, daily tasks they had the resolution innate in the Scotch character. Also they were sustained by a constant sense of church and duty. They were moralists to the core, a fact which keeps itself well in the foreground, characterizing a race, and in this instance a family. The pioneer Reids were people settling undaunted in wide, heavily wooded spaces, clearing away the trees, ploughing virgin fields, keeping back the wolves and wildcats (all these labors and dangers are authentically in the picture, wanting only the marauding savage to recall the first generation of the Puritans), and their outstanding trait is an heroic industry. But coloring all their transactions is a simple ideal driving at conduct.

James Reid, whom we must keep in view, briefly, was the true type of these devout folk. Drifting through Pennsylvania on his arrival in America, some time in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, he settled for a few years in Kentucky. Antislavery principles led him to depart from that State. In 1800 or thereabouts he moved over the river into Ohio and lived in the region along Brush Creek, on the southern border. Then he proceeded a little farther west and where Cincinnati now stands acquired a farm of several hundred acres. The single picturesque anecdote allied with his memory illustrates the chances of fate—and the Covenanter spirit. A ferry ran from his new land across the Ohio and a clause in the deed required him to see that it was in operation every day of the week. That meant a violation of the Sabbath, whereupon, making the discovery too late, he escaped the penalty by the only possible means, selling the land. If he had had any prescience of the wealth of which he was thus depriving his descendants, we may be sure that his decision would have been the same. Regardless of profit or loss he moved on, a Stoic in homespun. Now he turned north and in Greene County helped to found the town of Xenia.

It was on a good site, it was marked to thrive, and in due course to become the county-seat, with all the appurtenances and dignity of such a centre, but when James Reid sought his fortunes there conditions were of the most primitive order. Ohio was only admitted to the Union in 1803, and Xenia at that time was but a rudimentary hamlet. It is a legend in that part of the world that an ancient beech on the trail to Old Chillicothe long bore the inscription, cut by some captive of the Indian wars: "This is the road to hell, 1782." The scattered log cabins of Xenia made no earthly paradise. They but afforded repose after long days of back-breaking toil. Yet the settlers were happy, having brought their church with them. There was a clergyman of that period whose home was separated from the place of worship by a creek. When the water rose, he would cross it on stilts. Distance and weather were of no consequence to his people. For their two Sunday sermons they would ride or walk miles, and sit uncomplainingly in a fireless room.

Robert Charlton Reid, second son of James, was born near Lexington, Kentucky, in 1795, and was in his young manhood when his father died on the farm at Xenia. Four years later, in 1826, he was married at Garrison's Creek, Indiana, to Marion Whitelaw Ronalds, whose ancestry sprang direct from the ancient Highland clan of that name. Robert Ronalds, her grandfather, a farmer and cattle-raiser of Old Kilpatrick, near Glasgow, strongly objected to the emigration of his son, George Slater Ronalds, and only consented in the long run when persuaded that the leader who was to "have the oversight of him" on the voyage was a "prudent man." Such a sponsor appeared in the person of General James Whitelaw, one of the two commissioners sent out by the

Scotch-American Company of Farmers to select a townsite for a body of colonists. After much travel and chaffering, and thanks largely to the intervention of the celebrated John Witherspoon, president of Princeton College, they fixed upon Ryegate, in Vermont. Whitelaw, who was shortly to become surveyor-general of the State, and to remain to this day the local hero, more than fulfilled the Ronalds conception of the prudent man. Under his guardianship George Ronalds entered at once into the inner circle of the community. There was some distant connection between the Whitelaws and the Ronaldses, through a marriage far back. When Marion Ronalds was born at Ryegate in 1803, she was named also Whitelaw, in recognition of the tie, and circumstances deepened her loyalty to it. Part of her upbringing she received in the home of the old pioneer. At times when he was away she was left in charge of his office, a kind of microcosm of the affairs of Ryegate—which, I may note in passing, were not unlike to those of the slowly growing Xenia at which I have glanced, especially in the admixture of religious zeal with worldly energy. On her removal with the family to Garrison's Creek in 1820, a girl of seventeen, she carried with her an affection for the great man of her birthplace which she never lost. It was this affection that she expressed in the naming of her son, the subject of these pages.

She came as a bride to the ambitious little settlement which I have indicated Xenia to have been early in the last century, but she was to dwell far enough from the "main street" on which the founders were even then beginning to pride themselves. The Reid farm was well out toward the eastern border of the tract, and afterward—in fact, in 1850—was absorbed into Cedarville Township. It lies but a few miles from the centre of

Xenia and very near the village of Cedarville. Robert Charlton Reid built his homestead in the year of his marriage, 1826, doing much of the work with his own hands. He built it in the woods, making only a small clearing in front, and the property, which was extended ultimately to embrace some two hundred acres, is still rich in timber. When in after years Whitelaw Reid remodelled and enlarged the house he left untouched, so far as possible, its old simplicities. The principal bedroom was barely large enough to hold the four-poster which one of his mother's kinsmen had himself made for her as a wedding gift. Near by the house the young farmer let himself go in the making of a mighty barn, the great hewn oak framework of which still testifies to his foresight and to his skill as a craftsman. He was of a grave temperament. It is recorded in his epitaph that he was for forty years an active ruling elder of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, specially useful as a peacemaker in the community. In those days of a thin and widely scattered rural population it was the problem of every parish to find a good shepherd and keep him. One of the commonest duties of the elder Reid's life, to judge from the evidence of his papers, was to circulate a document beginning thus: "Anxious for the continuance of Divine ordinances amongst us, we the subscribers bind ourselves to pay the sums annexed to our names respectively for the Ministerial labors of any minister in the Reformed Church whom Providence may send our way." Again and again the Covenanters of Xenia were obliged thus to bind themselves, and always the name of Robert Charlton Reid was early in the list. He was unmistakably a man of good works, exemplifying to the full the religious ardor of his fathers. But there was nothing "dour," after the old Scotch fashion, about this pioneer and his helpmeet. Among his time-worn manuscripts

I have come upon "A gamott for the German flute," inscribed twice over with his careful signature, minutely indicating the function of the right hand and that of the left, and pointing, obviously, to a sprightly solace in his hours of ease. He and his wife were both assiduous readers. When he turned carpenter over the building of his house he gave particular attention to the making of the bookcases in the living-room, and saw that they were kept well filled. Their Bible, of course, they knew by heart.

There were three children of this marriage. Whitelaw Reid had a brother, born April 8th, 1828, and named Gavin McMillan, after a clergyman connected with the family, and a sister, Chestina, born June 12th, 1844. His christening, as I have indicated, was a ratification of Ryegate memories, but though he was named for General James Whitelaw, he did not receive the full patronymic of that old friend of his mother's. The point is the more exactly to be noted, for in after days it was not infrequently misstated, especially by political opponents, who for some mysterious reason fancied that they had him on the hip when they called him James, and completely destroyed when they called him Jacob. He was only amused by these amiable divagations, but when a serious inquirer referred the question to him in the last year of his life, he settled it, once and for all, as follows: "I was baptized simply Whitelaw Reid, and the baptismal name generally holds among Scotch Presbyterians. While I was still an infant my mother concluded that she would like to have the full name of General Whitelaw used, and I therefore used it until after my graduation, but dropped it when becoming of age." At college, by the way, his nickname was not "Jim" but "White."

The district school was but little more than a stone's throw from his father's house, and he was soon put to his lessons there. The master lived with the Reids and appears to have carried the boy to and fro. This master, one Bigham, was an original character, whose scholarship may not have left an indelible impression but whose popularity was beyond cavil. He had novel methods whereby to keep the pupils amused. The Reverend H. P. Jackson, a schoolfellow of Whitelaw's, has left this picture of the scene:

> When several scholars would get too lively to be tolerated, he would call them all up in line in the centre of the room, shove a long peacock feather down the back of the chief transgressor (the bushy part of the feather reaching above his head) and then cause each one to lift a foot, which was caught in the hand of the one behind, and so each in like manner, foot in hand, (excepting the one in the rear, who walked) went "Injun" fashion around the stove, which stood in the middle of the room; then right about face they hopped back again, while the school laughed to their heart's content. Whitelaw and I had several parades of this kind during that term.
>
> At one time he put Whitelaw in his desk and turned the key. It was a large desk with a lid that could be lifted up and shut down and locked and he called it his jail. It so happened that the teacher's dinner was in the desk. Whitelaw immediately went to eating and when his time was served out in that jail the teacher was minus his dinner.

It is the observation of this old comrade that "Whitelaw was very small, but very bright and intelligent," and he recalls him as a great talker, even in his tender years sitting up for a whole evening in converse with his elders. He was a true country boy, and his prowess in the usual "old swimming-hole" is still remembered about Cedarville. He loved the water always, and the exploits of his manhood, when he would swim out to sea, beyond the buoys, with his baby son on his shoulder, had their origin in the days when he and his playmates haunted Massie's Creek, the picturesque stream of his childhood. But the characteristic souvenirs of that period are those which point to his precocious mentality and his interest in bookish things. He was on fire to learn. The aptest reminiscence of these days is his own:

> I remember a lad, of ten or twelve years of age, coddled too much perhaps by anxious parents and a physician, who was told he must quit studying so hard, and take to light reading. Light reading was a phrase not well understood in sober families in Greene County in those days, and so the lad asked for particulars. "Oh, any light thing you please," answered the physician; "take Shakespeare!" The next week came along a doctor of another school, a Boanerges of the faith, Dr. McMaster. . . . According to the fashion of the day, the lad was promptly "examined," and after Catechism and Psalm Book and Latin declensions, followed questions of books. The advice about light reading thus came out. "Very bad advice," groaned the good doctor; "a very bad lesson for a boy. But what light reading have you?" Then Shakespeare was confessed and the horror was complete. "To think" exclaimed the doctor, "of the son of so good a man wasting his time and corrupting his mind with that frivolous and profane writer of plays!" And so Shakespeare was summarily taken away, and in his place light reading was furnished in the shape of Rollin's "Ancient History" in eight volumes! Not till nearly a year later did a kinder fate and a younger clergyman, the sainted McMillan, substitute Plutarch's "Lives" and the "Percy Anecdotes."

The "sainted McMillan" of the foregoing fragment was the Reverend Hugh McMillan, Whitelaw's uncle, who presided over the Xenia Academy and there rounded out his preparatory schooling. He was an ideal guide for the boy's eager footsteps, strict in discipline but as kind and sympathetic as he was wise. In his view of education the classics came second only to sound theological principles. So good a Latinist did he make his charge that at sixteen the latter was able to enter college as a sophomore and to rank in his special study with the senior class.

Miami University, to which he proceeded in 1853, was then but a little more than quarter of a century old. It was established at Oxford, in Butler County, only about fifty miles southwest of Xenia in a direct line, but far enough away in that era of slow communications to make the adventure exciting. Though the university was ultimately to justify its designation by its sons as the Yale of the West, he found there an environment and a mode of life very like what he had left behind him, a community slowly outgrowing the hard conditions of a new settlement. It was only in the preceding decade that it had been found necessary to warn students against duelling, to say nothing of cards and dancing, and amongst the university laws of that time there was even this one: "No student shall wear about his person pistol, dirk, stiletto, or other dangerous weapon." Evidently, however, by the time Whitelaw arrived, these edicts had accomplished their soothing effect. The life upon which he entered is described in this letter to Gavin:

Miami University, Oct. 10th, 1853.

DEAR BROTHER;

I received yours of the 26th a week ago. I intended to answer it last Saturday but forgot it and so I take this time, before daylight, for it. Let me give you an outline of my way of doing for a day. Then to begin, first and foremost I get up, and stay up. Now by that you are to understand that I do not study lying on the bed, the way I used to. Then after washing I sometimes start out and take a long walk, especially if the morning be cool. It is, however, contrary to the strict law of College, and I always try to be back before anybody else is up. The law is that we must be in our rooms from 7 in the evening till Chapel next morning. It is, however, only intended to prevent the students from being on the streets late at night, and I do not know that they would make any objection to walking in the morning. I met Prof. Stoddard one morning anyhow and he spoke to me very politely. I then study till breakfast, which Stevens gets. Then I review until 7½ o'clock, when we meet in Chapel. Then we recite at 8, 9 & 10 to Profs. Wylie, Elliott and Bishop. Then study or write till 12. If it be either Monday, Wednesday or Friday, at one we recite German to Prof. Thuby, the best linguist in college. Then study for the next day till half after 5, when I get my supper (each one of us prepares a meal). After that I either walk, call on some one or am called on.

There are a great many fellows who come in when the mail comes, at 11½, or at supper time. Then study, write or read till 9½ to 10. Thus you see I have my hands full. If a fellow gets his lessons right the Sophomore year he has just as much as he ought to do. After that it becomes much easier. But to get lessons the way most of our class do I could get all in an hour, or less.

I suppose you know Sam Hammel. At any rate he has been telling me a string of yarns about the times he used to have with you. He is the most wretched bore I have met with at College. He will come down and want to get out lessons along with me, and it takes me half an hour longer to get them out with his help than without it. We are now reading in Thucydides, about the hardest Greek in the course. Well, the other day he came up here and got me to read the lesson for the next day, and he wrote it down as I read. That morning old Charley calls up Mr. Hammel. Sam gets up and reads off the Greek, having the translation in the book. He then very deliberately reads off the translation and takes his seat. Now this is nothing uncommon here, with such fellows as he is, but to make 99 or 100 on my labor was a little more than I liked. I am getting in Greek a grade of 99 and 100, all the time. About the same I believe in the other studies.

I go out to Uncle's every week when there is preaching there. I have a standing excuse for Sabbath from Chapel. We get plenty of apples at Uncle's. Our hall is something in a debate and no mistake. It, the hall proper, is nearly finished. I shall tell you next time what it looks like.

Answer soon. I intend to write Saturday week. Next Saturday I will write to Father, so that every Saturday I will write either to you or Father. I expect by this time that you have wonderingly come to the conclusion that there is plenty of gas about Oxford and so I will quit.

Yours affectionately,

WHITELAW REID.

The letter suggests a rapidly maturing character. His life was one of plain living in the strictest sense, but at sixteen a daily regimen recalling in its severity that of Carlyle and his bag of oatmeal in Edinburgh has no terrors for him. Neither Spartan fare nor unremitting work can lower his spirits. The paper is of some interest, too, in its clear, systematic statement of the day's programme, a foreshadowing of the descriptive faculty which he was to develop and make a source of his success as a writer. The practical traits of his forebears and an inborn gift combined to enlist him, even in his youth, on the side of balance, order. In the little book on "Old Miami," by Mr. A. H. Upham, there is a sympathetic vignette of Whitelaw Reid at the university, "a long-haired, pale-faced, graceful youth, nervous, industrious and ambitious." He was an active man in his fraternity—a D. K. E.—and it is noted that his favorite hobby in its councils was "compact organization." In storm or calm he insisted always on "strict obedience to King Caucus." It was part of his nature. He liked to know what he was about, to proceed regularly, to know where he—and others—stood, and to make all things shipshape. There were no loose ends about his college career.

The faculty was small but efficient. Stoddard in the natural sciences, Elliott—"Old Charley"—in Greek literature, Bishop in Latin, were the leaders in a group of men whose methods were nothing if not thorough. They gave their students a pretty exhaustive training, but if they had a foible in common it was an almost religious confidence in the classics. David Swing, who was graduated in the Class of 1852, and filled a professorship at Miami in Reid's time, recorded in his memories "the general impression among us boys that nothing good had been written since Homer and Virgil." Whitelaw, whose experience in the Latin classes at Xenia had well prepared him for this atmosphere of thought, and whose taste responded to it with all the enthusiasm in the world, was at the same time equally ready for other subjects, as Doctor Swing thus relates: "He was a more universal genius than any of his college companions. He loved anything that was in a book. He could read theology or a Patent Office report, a novel or a history, with avidity. He was thus unconsciously preparing himself for that profession which demands a mind that will turn in an hour from poetry to politics, from Homer to Boss Tweed." The diversity of his interests kept him from being a grind.

In his second year at Miami he began to write for publication, a practice which he developed until on the eve of his graduation he could claim to have won the status of a "regular correspondent." Some of these early ventures of his—chiefly reports of college lectures—were printed in the local paper, the Oxford "Citizen," and he found intermittent hospitality elsewhere for his literary beginnings, notably in the "Kansas Free State," of Wyandotte, for a series on "Heroes of Liberty in the Commonwealth," John Hampden, Oliver Cromwell, and John Milton. But the writings that meant most to him were those for the "Intelligencer," a weekly of four pages published at the near-by town of Hamilton. His contributions were at first made casually and at varying intervals, but for about four months in his senior year he was in the saddle as sole conductor of the "Oxford Department," a column or more devoted to affairs in the university and its immediate neighborhood—and to comment thereon. The work he then did, if necessarily jejune in some respects, also reveals an aptitude greater than he himself suspected, and an extension of his sympathies far beyond the bookish horizon of the classroom. He is still the burning young scholar, nay, a very precisian in the mint and cummin of the literary law, quick to rebuke a contemporary in the smallest matter of grammar or style; but he is almost excitedly aware of the fact that the world is filled with a number of things, and never was a budding editor readier to take account of them all. The "Oxford Department" tingles with the joy of living.

One of the books that he took with him to Miami was

"The Student's Manual," piously designed by the Reverend John Todd, author of "Lectures to Children," to "aid in forming and strengthening the intellectual and moral character and habits of the student." It is, to tell the truth, a rather dull compilation of impeccable axioms, but there are signs that Whitelaw read it, and it was in line with his way of thinking to mark a passage like this: "We need a power, which, in the present state of our existence, we do not possess, a power of keeping all that ever passes through our mind which is worth keeping." Again, he marks the page conveying the solemn truth that "There is no excellence without toil," and on the fly-leaf he scrawls the Virgilian tag—commended to how many young collegians, before and since! —*Labor omnia vincit.* The interesting thing is that he not only inscribed the trite motto in his book but lived up to it. This biography has not been projected as a study in hero-worship; it is framed as a narrative of facts, and the outstanding fact in the early life of its subject is the solidity of his achievement. "I am getting in Greek a grade of 99 and 100, all the time," we have seen him writing to his brother, in the first of his three years at Miami. "About the same, I believe, in the other studies." The quiet boast was made good. He persisted in that spirit, and on his graduation, with the honors of his class in science, he could claim also the honors in classics. A graceful incident to record is that at his request the latter were yielded to one of his classmates.

He issued from the university, then, well equipped and uncommonly well poised. A thoughtful self-reliance and a judgment beyond his years were the elements in his character especially fostered by his life at Miami, and soon thereafter made manifest in the unfolding of his career. But he was still very young—only nineteen—and along with his Scotch faculty of decision there were plenty of the uncertain moods of youth. Before we follow him back to Xenia it is interesting to observe how he struck a contemporary, his college comrade, "Joe" Millikin, afterward a clergyman, then and always the frankest, most human of friends. Writing in the late eighties a long letter of reminiscent reflection, he says:

> Since we were much together we have both become men, and I wish I had a week to talk to you, and see how nearly the trees have grown according to the bend of the twigs. I have had to dis-pedestal some of my quondam gods—is your old pantheon intact? I believe I had the most to learn—you the most to un-learn, and is the process completed? To me the world was full of knightliness and wisdom and charm; to you it was all Boeotia and whoever wasnt a hyena was a jackass; what sort of a world is it now, old fellow? Anyway, how you have prospered in it—and I owe it decent treatment for that, if nothing else. From your debut at Oxford I knew you had brains, but I confess to amazement at your having revealed any tact whatever. I knew you had brains, but that you would ever have any common sense and flexibility I confess was for a time beyond my wildest hopes for you! Well, you've worked for your success—you deserved it—you've got it; and God bless you in it and the world by it; and I'll fight the man that would detract from it.

The good-will here so handsomely expressed was all about him when he left the university. He was a popular student, admired for his abilities and liked for his personality. His friends believed that he would make his mark. How he would do this was, of course, a problem on the knees of the gods. His work for the "Intelligencer" had given him some ideas to play with but had left his future path undefined. He started for home with no profession fixed in his mind, and as a matter of fact it was to take him several years to find himself. But he had at least a guiding principle. He had begun to translate into action the Latin poet's phrase I have already cited, and, garnering the first-fruits of its application, he faced whatever tasks might come with a deep conviction that labor would indeed conquer all things.

CHAPTER II

CHOOSING A CAREER

The Class of 1856 at Miami gave most of its members to the professions. The law claimed nine and the church seven. Two became teachers. Several business men emerge from the group, and one of them, a banker, appears to have engaged also in some agricultural enterprise. But there was only one farmer, pure and simple, amongst them all. It is the subject for a remark—which might easily be expanded into a chapter—on the almost dramatically transitional nature of that period in which Reid was turned loose to find a livelihood, pay back his father for part, at least, of his college course, and carve out a future for himself. "The tools to him that can handle them," a phrase which he liked to quote, has never meant more in American life than it meant to the younger generation in the Ohio Valley. With increasing material prosperity and the greater security in new ventures which it promised, ambition was raised to a higher pitch. It was the university that had done it. It was the university that supplied the tools, and youth was not only eager to use them but confident of its aptitude in the matter and proudly convinced that there was nothing else to do.

The evidence that comes crowding upon the student of this phase of our national history, in a region such as that to which Reid belonged, is all illustrative of a type of man not in the smallest degree disloyal to his forebears—who worked with their hands—but moved, and encouraged, as a matter of course, to work first and last with his brains. If opportunity was not to be met at every turn of the road it was, at all events, in some vaguely exciting way, to be felt in the air. The spirit of the colonizers was revived in another form. They had come over here to clear the forest and till the fields. Their work being in large measure done, their descendants turned to other spheres of action. Incidentally the drift from farming to the bar or the pulpit or the counting-room marked a change in racial habit. The Scotch traits on which I have placed some emphasis in the preceding chapter persisted as elements of character. Allegiance to the church continued. But we are not so much aware now of Scotch "local color," and if the young Ohioan still recognizes the authority of his pastors and masters he is, nevertheless, a more worldly wise individual than he was before he went to college, and he is given to a wider range of ideas. Some such transformation as this of the individual alumnus has doubtless been observable in every community since our colleges began. The graduate flourishing his degree, with the world before him, is a familiar figure if ever there was one. At a place like Xenia, in the fifties, he exercised serious functions and is representative of a crucial stage in the development of his State. Making the commencement address at the seventy-fifth anniversary of Miami, in 1899, Reid characterized the effect of the little college upon its earlier students—it had made of them "citizens who leavened the lump of that growing West, which was then a sprawling, irregular line of pioneer settlements and is now an empire." That was not an empty compliment made by a prejudiced eulogist. It was the exact statement of an historical fact.

The difference between the old point of view and the new is well enforced by the difference between Whitelaw Reid and his brother. Though Gavin was only seven years older he was far more closely identified with what I may designate as the routine sentiment of his people, the strict Covenanter tradition. He, too, broke away from the farm, going into business in Xenia and making not infrequent journeys East and West. He was of an energetic and cheerful temperament, and when in New York he thought nothing of going to Niblo's to see the Ravels, or of treating himself to an oyster supper after a performance of "Romeo and Juliet." But it is more characteristic of him to seize every possible chance to hear Beecher preach or lecture, and the natural mood of the man comes out most informingly in this passage from a letter written in New York in 1855: "It is awful to think of the wickedness of this great city. It has produced an effect upon me which I think time can never efface." Whitelaw just then was immured in Oxford, quite safe from any metropolitan dangers. But if I gather anything from the record of his college career it is that, for him, Gavin's fears would have been unthinkable. He was the man of the world in his circle, the rising hope of the whole clan. It seems to have been expected, even then, that Xenia and its neighborhood would not long confine him.

The elder Reid was in his sixty-first year when Whitelaw came home, and though he was not very strong he was hale enough to keep the farm going. If he had needed his son's help he could have counted upon its being affectionately given, but he was good-humoredly ready to accept the fact that the boy's mind was on other things. It was, indeed, useless to send him out with the plough. Whitelaw's mother used to recall with a smile that when that happened he would shortly afterward be discovered leaning against the handle, absorbed, like Bobbie Burns, in a book, while the horses took their repose. He was more than ready to work—but with the tools he had acquired at Miami. He was graduated at the end of June. In September a letter from the homestead, written to Gavin by his wife, contains the momentous announcement that Whitelaw "has taken the office of Superintendent of the Graded Schools at South Charleston for $50.00 per month." His vocation seems settled. There is, however, more interesting news in the brief sentence that follows: "He delivers his speech in Xenia one week from Friday." It was a speech for Fremont, made by a youngster who could not yet vote, but who thus early, and prophetically, affirmed his instinct for what he was long afterward to call "the good old wholesome Greene County respect for politics." 1856 was a presidential year. Pierce was presently to go out and Buchanan to come in. Meanwhile Kansas was in eruption, and public feeling on the grim subject of the hour was nearing the explosive point. For Reid it was impossible to sit silent, to take no part in the battle. In fact, he had chosen his side and begun to fight for it before he left college. He was already a devoted Republican. His speech at Xenia was above all things a speech for the new party. He did not preserve it and it is, indeed, only in retrospect that this slight political experience assumes a certain importance. Thus regarded it is a landmark in his life, a profession of faith carrying with it unconscious intimations of his taste and fitness for the career of a publicist. But he knew it only as an interlude, part of the holiday due to him before he took up his responsibilities as a school-teacher.

They were hard but not uncongenial, these duties of the classroom—an interesting kind of drudgery. The young women who were his subordinates attended to the general curriculum. He had the classes in Latin and French and taught, also, the higher mathematics. It stiffened his self-reliance to deal with pupils who in some cases had passed his own age, and in the pursuit of his task he went further into his subject than he had gone when in college. In later days, looking back at the discipline, he felt that it had done him good. He submitted to it whole-heartedly. Though South Charleston was only a little farther from the homestead than Xenia, and quickly accessible by train, he lived close to his work. A daily railroad journey was hardly practicable, and, besides, it would have interfered with the plans of economy he had in view. He wanted to repay to his father the expenses of his senior year at Miami, and did so ultimately by saving from his salary. Then the exile, if such it was, had its pleasant side. Nettie, his sister-in-law, was his favorite correspondent, and their letters were usually written in gay spirits. The world went very well. "I am prospering finely," he exclaims. The Latin lessons lasted through two winters, and they were beneficial. On the other hand, they led nowhere. While he found inspiration in teaching, forming an interest in the subject which was to keep him active in educational matters down to the day of his death, he saw in South Charleston no opportunity for a career. Not even at Miami itself were there prospects exactly alluring. In any case he did not yet know just what he wanted to do. All he knew was that he wanted to do something, something that was different. Meanwhile anything was possible, so that it meant work and the reward for work. Through this period the interest lies in his mere hunger for employment and the variety of ways in which he strove to get it.

He communicated with a New England lock-maker, hoping to become that manufacturer's agent in Greene County. Between recitations in the schoolhouse he coquetted with the idea of editing a little country paper in Kentucky. When his health finally gave out under the strain of teaching he thought of restoring it by adopting some business embracing travel and exercise, and wrote, explaining this, to his Congressman, the Hon. Aaron Harlan. Could he not secure a situation as civil engineer "in some one of the many expeditions sent out by the Government which require the services of a Surveyor, or in the unexecuted surveys in the Territories?" He had got wind of an expedition fitting out to explore a route for a wagon road to the Pacific. Why could he not join it? Harlan's reply was cordial but disillusionizing. Every such situation was a political plum and only bestowed by the bashaws controlling it upon their followers and friends. "Indeed," he writes from Washington, "these places are not left open here long enough for the lightning to carry you the news before they are filled." That door, then, was hopeless. Whereupon he remembered his French and German, which were above the average collegian's, and proposed himself as translator to half a dozen of the great publishing houses in the East. Lamartine's "Raphael" was one of the books he talked about—and talked about in vain. The publishers told him that translations were unprofitable, that the few that got into print did so by way of England, and that questions of copyright abroad were troublesome. There was something paralyzing about the pronouncement of one eminent firm. "Those who read the more important works," he was informed, "would prefer to read them in the original, and if they cannot read the original they are not likely to have the taste." For an all-round prohibitory clincher that was little short of a masterpiece. It was not for the would-be translator to resist such an argument. If literature was at the moment impossible, there were humbler and perhaps stabler sources of advancement to be tackled. He applied for, and obtained, the local agency for a new writing fluid, and undertook at the same time to sell apple-trees for a Syracuse firm of nurserymen. There was no end to his hopes and fears or to his energy. He snatched at every straw.

A diary kept at this feverish stage of his ambition presents an interesting—and intensely American—picture of life kept in touch with the outside world yet quite remote from it. On the farm he was, in a sense, marooned. For the folks thereabouts a journey to Xenia, "in the cars," had by this time become distinctly a journey "to town." Reid often went there, on horseback, and rode or walked to Cedarville village, but most of his time was spent at home, resting from his school labors, reading omnivorously, and forever making plans. The atmosphere in the picture I speak of is one of detachment, of a certain loneliness not uncheerful, of youth waiting impatiently for fortune to turn up and in the interval enjoying itself. For recreation there was the swimming-hole in Massie's Creek, and occasionally he would go out with a gun, but it was more profitable to "trifle over 'The Newcomes.'" He "blew on the flute a little," and from the frequency of another record—"practised drawing"—it is clear that he was happy with a pencil in his hand. But most revealing of all the oddments in his diary are passages like the following:

> Found a pleasant place in the grass and read "Raphael."
>
> Got the "Atlantic" for July. Read a page or two in the delightfully cool ravine below Jackson's house.
>
> Spent some time reading the Bible. Then read "Pilgrim's Progress." I find it delightful to dream over again those immortal dreams which my youth has made mine as well as the tinker's.
>
> Read the dailies.
>
> Read The Tribune.
>
> Spent the forenoon in an indolent way over my bound volumes of The Tribune.

He read unceasingly. Some of his reading was done for a practical purpose. Religiously he gave himself a daily task in French, and, he says, "this morning hour somehow gets expanded sometimes so as to contain twice sixty minutes." An apt note ensues therefrom: "Agreed to give Stuart Frazier lessons in French." But this is really a side issue. He reads, otherwise, all the time, for the joy of reading, and he reads everything—Bayne on Macaulay, Sumner's speeches, "Waverley" (in which he rejoices, though he can't like Scott's women, Irving's Julia Somerville pleasing him "more than the whole of them"), and De Quincey, whose "Klosterheim" he finds a "work too much on the sensation system, but which betrays the hand of the artist." From a friend he borrows Kinglake's "Eothen." On his own shelves he had Homer, Virgil, "The Arabian Nights," Cary's Dante, Paley's "Natural Theology," Carlyle, Gray, and Keats. "The Eve of St. Agnes" so arrested him that he "copied gems from it." In French he ranged from Molière to Scribe, read the letters of Voltaire and Rousseau, plodded through the solid volumes of Merle d'Aubigné's "Reformation," and simply battened on De Tocqueville. The "Ancien Régime" of the latter seizes his imagination—"it grows more interesting as it proceeds"—and, finishing it in a few days, he declares it "a masterpiece."

In the midst of his bookish absorptions there befell a stimulating call from Miami. It was the custom there for each of the three literary societies to summon an old alumnus to act as "Diploma Deliverer" at Commencement. In 1858, for the first time, the three united to vote for one man who would be asked to act for all, and Reid's election brought him, therefore, a new and peculiarly resplendent honor. He accepted it with becoming gravity and gave heroic pains to the composition of the expected oration. It grew very slowly, bit by bit, and to a great extent out of his reading. "Put in the forenoon in a sort of desultory way on my speech, intermixing it with reading a good deal of poetry." He speaks of ransacking his Latin authors for "old truisms I ought to throw together," and he sought quotations wherever he could find them. Then came the painful job of memorizing his periods, and after that their declamation in solitude, so that when the great day arrived he could record with some satisfaction that he had delivered "a good deal of it in extempore." The lines from Shakespeare, from Virgil, from Tennyson, upon which he relied in his study, were all directed on the platform to the development of a thesis very much his own. Other Diploma Deliverers before him had doubtless urged their listeners to face the chances of the future with resolution and a clean heart, to "suffer and be strong," nor was there anything very novel in his adjuration to them to think for themselves, to speak for themselves, to act for themselves, to follow no man's dictation, to walk in no party's leading-strings. But the gist of the speech lies in a warning of the perils ahead, suggesting almost an anticipation of the war so soon to burst forth. "At home and abroad the same dark terrible portents startle us. We are fast coming upon times which will call for all your strength. We have already seen wars and rumors of wars, but the convulsive upheaving of all things that the signs of the times indicate as at hand no eye hath yet seen save that of prophetic vision." He had, himself, a glimmer of that vision. Young as he was he had read aright the lesson of bleeding Kansas.

It helped to give a decisive turn to his thoughts on his own course. That was all the time pointing to the arena in which the battle of his generation impended, and his growing realization of the fact is shown by the manner in which he put aside intervening opportunities.

On the way home from the ceremonies at Miami he revisited South Charleston and saw all his old friends. "Talked with Tom Houston. He as well as everybody else here, seems very anxious to have me come back and teach." They might as successfully have asked him to come back and plough. In the process of snatching at straws to which I have alluded he had steadily been learning to pick and choose. The various agencies aforementioned were little more than hopeful experiments, soon abandoned. The offer of a share in the book-shop at Xenia left him indifferent. But another proposal soon after led to more serious reflection. "Had a long talk with Jim Liggett," he notes in his diary. "He has sold out the 'News' to Hogue and is going to study Theology. He wants me to do the same." The Covenanter in him was touched but not convinced. He knew his own temperament—as will appear by and by in a deeply pondered letter on the subject—and though he read sermons as well as listened to them (two every Sunday, rain or shine), he had no impulse to preach them. There is a modest dramatic interest in the little episode of his talk with the editor turning churchman. While Jim Liggett, all unconscious, was urging him to follow the same path, he gazed past his friend into the office of the "News," and his journalistic tendencies, stirred to new life by new possibilities, suddenly asserted themselves as never before. He began to look around him.

With his friend Patton he talked about buying the two papers published in Xenia and combining them. When that plan fell through he went back to Liggett, and this time nothing was said about the ministry. On the contrary, the retiring proprietor of the "News" was ready, instead, to persuade the new one to engage Reid to edit the paper. Editorship alone was not enough.

He wanted to taste the sweets of ownership, of complete authority, and having set his heart upon them he moved now with redoubled celerity. The subject had been opened early in July. Before the middle of the month he could report progress, and on the 14th he "spent the day principally in negotiations for the paper." There were the usual maddening hitches. Things would get into a state of "proflusity," and on the eve of settlement another purchaser appears to have turned up, so that the most earnest manœuvring still left the outcome in doubt. But he had a business man to go in with him, a partner of Gavin's, R. P. Gray, and between them they achieved the *coup*. Within a few days he was in the saddle, and on July 23rd, 1858, about a fortnight after he had begun his campaign, the "News" bore his name, at the top of its principal page, as editor and proprietor. Not until the fall would he be twenty-one.

CHAPTER III

THE XENIA "NEWS"

The inhabitants of Xenia were from the foundation of the town hospitable to the press. If in the early days they could not pay in cash for the luxury of a paper, they paid for it in kind. The editor of the "People's Press and Impartial Expositor," a journal of the twenties, was wont to accept from his rural readers, in lieu of money, flour, bacon, beeswax, feathers, sugar, and tallow. And this public was exacting. Papers came, in surprising numbers for so new a region, and, failing to satisfy, disappeared. The "News," started by J. W. Dumble, a printer, and Preston B. Plumb, afterward United States Senator from Kansas, had lasted four years when Whitelaw Reid took it over. He gave it an even firmer foundation and, in fact, so fostered its prosperity that within little more than a year he could boast of the largest circulation enjoyed by any paper of the kind published in Ohio. The material achievement, substantial as it was, would occupy as such but small space in this biography. It formed only a brief prelude to other undertakings having a far more decisive influence upon his career, and it figures, indeed, as a rather isolated affair. The relation of the paper to the growth of his character is of the highest interest, not only exposing individual traits but bringing out, as in some poignant foot-note to history, a representative American experience. The ninety-nine numbers of the weekly bearing his imprimatur embody a moving, sometimes positively thrilling, record of the state of mind in which the North faced the lowering crisis. Events which have since taken on an historical remoteness live again in the yellowed pages, quivering with the passion they roused at the time. We know their conclusion. We have seen the completed picture and are thoroughly well used to it. The ante-bellum files of the Xenia "News," more even than the equivalent volumes of a great metropolitan daily, have something of the character of unpublished memoirs. The predominating subject has a sharper salience. The atmosphere is more intensely personal. Reid's paper opens a window on his life. There is excitement in looking through it, in observing the conduct of a young man "on the ground," breathlessly watching for what each day may bring forth and striking out, in the growing dark, at what he knew for the oncoming evil.

A spectator of his doings then has left an impression of him as a tall, sunburned youth, pointed out on his walks abroad as one of whom it was well to stand a little in awe, "as he was not afraid to make critical personal remarks in his paper." In his own accounts of his apprenticeship he liked to remember its practical side, calling himself a printer as well as an editor. Western journalism was ever early in enterprise. As far back as 1834 a press run by steam-power had been installed in the offices of the Cincinnati "Gazette." In towns like Xenia such expedients were long to remain as unattainable as a numerous staff. Reid did all the multifarious tasks that fell to the lot of the journalist in a small county-seat sixty years ago. He wrote not only editorials but "Chit Chat"—local paragraphs—and did much besides writing. He set type and sometimes worked off the paper on the clumsy machine that answered the purposes of the "News." It was part of his pride as a newspaper man, then and afterward, to produce a handsome page. "I have worked a hand-press," he once told the Typothetæ, "just enough to be not a perfect workman, but a man capable of knowing perfect work when I see it; more than that, a man capable of appreciating fine taste and the typographical skill which go to make a good printer." I remember his impatience with a foreman in the composing-room of The Tribune who sought to excuse a badly set column on the ground of his not having received editorial instructions in that particular case. "Editorial instructions!" he exclaimed. "Are you not a printer? No printer who knows his business needs editorial instructions as to how a column in a newspaper should be made to look."

The printing of the "News" was extraordinarily good, six broad columns of a bold, open type making a dignified page. Errors would creep in, of course, and they caused him anguish. "The types make strange havoc of a writer's thoughts," he bitterly complains on one occasion, and gives a few specimens. When he tried to pay tribute to a college as a "well deserving institution," he was made to call it "hell deserving." He learned to take this sort of thing with resigned good humor. The work in the office was done, on the whole, so well under his vigilant eye that four hands had to be employed on the job press, a considerable crew for the time and place. In the make-up of the paper the sobriety of its typography was an index to its character as a miscellany of sound reading matter. His ambition was to make his journal "a comprehensive and reliable newspaper, for both foreign and domestic intelligence," and though he pitched his standard high he would serve no academic prejudices. In an early issue he makes the significant announcement that "a great deal of matter is crowded out this week by the report of the murder trial which will be found in our columns." In the same issue he pays his compliments to the spectators of the bout between Morrissey and the Benicia Boy in Canada. "A worse set of scape-gallowses could scarcely be collected, low, filthy, brutal, bludgeon-bearing scoundrels, ready for any dishonorable act—the very class of men who have built up the Tammany Hall party in New York, and to whose well paid labors that party owes almost its existence." But he does not omit to record the name of the winner, and in the spring of 1860, when the *Vanderbilt* reached New York with news from London of the great Heenan-Sayers fight, he got out an extra on the subject, a curious little leaflet, a sort of elongated post-card, pasted to the main sheet. It was his recognition of news as news. "The simple truth is," he said editorially, "that everybody is interested in the fight, and everybody reads about it. Look at the hundred thousand copies apiece, of the 'Herald,' 'Tribune,' and 'Times' that were sold in New York, within five hours after the arrival of the steamer." It couldn't be explained away, not even by referring it, quaintly, to a revulsion in favor of Physical Education! Meanwhile, there was the news. He printed it.

I cite the incident as showing his possession of the first instinct of the journalist, an instinct for the world in which he lives. But that very world of Ohio in mid-nineteenth century, avid for information of the ring, was in nowise forgetful of the austerity of the pioneers. That is what makes the "News" of Reid's administration worth reading. It had not the smallest resemblance to the crude country paper, with "patent insides," out of which the comic paragrapher still gets his fun by the simple use of quotation. It reflected the fine idealism, the good taste, the reading habit of a public accustomed to sincere thinking on profitable subjects. The subscribers to the "News" had no acquaintance with culture as Matthew Arnold understood it. On the other

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hand, they believed utterly in the principle which he was so fond of enunciating, the principle of knowing the best that had been thought and said in the world. They wanted to hear, also, about the things being done in the world that were really worth while. When the Atlantic cable was successfully laid, Reid printed Cyrus Field's famous despatches announcing the fact at the top of the editorial page and put a "scare-head" over them. That was the kind of news he craved. The first page of the paper frequently bears political intelligence and editorial comment, but its one stable feature is a collection of pure literature. Poetry is invariably there, the poetry of such writers as Whittier, Lowell, Bayard Taylor, and Bryant, and the fragments borrowed from the novelists and other prose writers are by Holmes, De Quincey, Thackeray, Dumas, Edward Everett, Mrs. Stowe, and the like—with Horace Greeley leading all the rest. It is the business of a newspaper to be in the van; as he expressed it, after years of experience, to embrace in its outlook "every new and significant fact affecting the social, political, intellectual or moral movements of the world." He had that doctrine in his youth at Xenia.

The noticeable thing about its influence upon him then is the breadth of interest which it gave to his columns. A good deal of his news—since the paper appeared but once a week—was set forth in editorial paragraphs or articles. These display the born journalist's ease in handling such diversified topics as horse-breeding and the Lady Franklin expedition, Blondin's crossing of Niagara River on a tight rope and Lord Macaulay's retirement from public life. He had the indispensable *flair* for the subject promising "good copy." A typical instance relates to Doctor Dionysius Lardner's letter to the London "Times" in 1859, on the use of chemistry in warfare, a letter uncannily foreshadowing the practices of the Germans in our own times. Reid pounced upon the document and made it the subject of a leader which yields these striking passages:

> Dr. Lardner gravely states that the engines of war which destroy life by mere mechanical effects, cutting, piercing, bruising, tearing off limbs and the like, including the whole class of cannons, Paixhan guns, bomb shells, chain shot, etc., may be wholly superseded, as comparatively harmless. . . . For instance, he says there are compounds known to chemistry, which spontaneously ignite, on being exposed to the air, diffusing gases and vapors which have the effect of rendering insensible all who breathe them. Such compounds, thrown into the midst of an army, would destroy the activity of thousands with the most unfailing certainty. . . . But as if this were not enough Dr. Lardner points out a mode of bringing Cyanogen into the service of war, and employing its terrible properties. By combining it with arsenic, a compound is founded, which on being exploded, will by combination with the gases of the atmosphere instantly form two of the most fearful poisons known in modern chemistry—arsenious acid and prussic acid. These would be diffused, in a gaseous form, through the entire atmosphere and on being thrown into bodies of troops, would destroy as suddenly as the cannon ball, thousands at an explosion. Truly, as the eminent chemist remarks, before such infernal enginery, gunpowder must pale its ineffectual fires!
>
> Yet terrible as these lessons of science are, they are not to be regretted. Just as improvements in the destructive agencies of war have advanced, has the destruction of life diminished. With such tremendous agencies as these at its command, war becomes a trial of speed. The party which can fire the first bombs is the victor. No surer means can be devised for diminishing the number of hostile encounters, and placing in its strongest colors the absurdity of war. Viewed in this light, these terrible improvements in destruction, these inventions for the wholesale murder of armies, become really contributions to civilization, and harbingers of the better time coming. As an able writer has remarked, "a formula of the chemist thus becomes the terror of Moloch, the herald of the Millennium."

There are other evidences in the paper of his interest in military questions. Magenta and Solferino were fought while he was in the editorial chair at Xenia. He wrote spirited leaders on both battles, and endeavored, with the limited data at his command, to analyze them with such reference to the numbers of troops engaged, communications, topography, and so on as to throw light on the strategical issues involved in them.

I have given some indications of the routine bases of his journalism in Xenia, his attention to the general questions of make-up and news, his practice as a printer and reporter. These were, indeed, the foundations of his success in the profession. But they were only the foundations. When his friend Minor Millikin, Joe's brother, withdrew from the editorship of the Hamilton "Intelligencer," he announced that "of all the forms of labor man is cursed with, that of editing and publishing a country paper is the most exacting, the most slavish, the most exhausting, and least remunerative." For Reid the task of editing and publishing a country paper was a sheer joy, a thing for exultation, and the reason is plain. It suited his temperament and his natural gifts. It gave him an outlet for seething mental energies. It gave him a place in which to speak his mind on the overwhelming subject of the moment, for which he cared as the crusader cares for his goal. The Xenia paper was for him no mere repository of news nor was it a mere means of earning a living. It was his tripod, his pulpit, his organ—as tangibly so as The Tribune was the mouthpiece of his demigod, Greeley. There, as I have prefigured, is the point to his editorship of the "News," and it is as one of the prime documents of his career that I reproduce the "Salutatory" in which he announces the color of his editorial policy:

> The "News," it is scarcely necessary to say, will continue to maintain those Republican principles which are destined finally to become the political creed of the nation. It is unnecessary here to make a long "confession" of my political "faith." Suffice it to say that I firmly believe in that "platform of 1776," which the Republican

party re-affirm and maintain; and I hold that all other issues must be held subordinate to those which imperatively called for the formation of that Republican party in 1854, and which now as imperatively call for its continued existence. Those issues will not "down," and until they are finally and successfully settled, all other issues of less overwhelming magnitude must be held subordinate. The present aspect of the political horizon affords little ground for the belief that the cardinal principles, for which we contend, are likely to be acknowledged and established without the triumph of the Republican party. Meantime Republicans have every reason to be encouraged. A party, which in four years has achieved so many solid triumphs in the face of virulent prejudices, and in spite of the most violent opposition, has no reason to doubt the final triumph of its noble principles; and in that faith I shall battle on, with whatever ability I may, until our labors shall be crowned with final success.

But while thus distinctly expressing my adherence to Republican principles, I wish to be clearly understood as adhering to the PRINCIPLES, and to the party only so long and so far as it remains true to those principles. Parties are mutable and liable to corruption and perversion; principles are enduring. I have no intention of enrolling myself among the number of those party slaves, who fear to believe save as the party may direct, and blindly follow their leaders, no matter whither their course may tend. It is rather my desire to sustain the character of the "News" as an independent, outspoken paper, having its own opinions and proclaiming them on all fitting occasions, without fear or favor. I have long admired those words which the Cincinnati "Commercial" bears at its head, "independent, not neutral," and it will be my aim to exhibit something of their purport in my conduct of the "News."

The whole force of this manifesto of Republicanism is concentrated in the assertion that "all other issues must be held subordinate to those which imperatively called for the formation of that Republican party in 1854." The "News" was an antislavery paper or it was nothing, and in its devotion to the all-engrossing topic exactly mirrored the attitude of the party. Whitelaw Reid was all his life an organization man, and acquaintance with the campaigns of his youth enables us to see why. He was born in the year which witnessed the killing of Lovejoy. From the moment that he began to think about public affairs—and that, in his generation, was at an early age—he was bound to think of freedom for the slave. Hence the Republican party, which thought hardly about anything else, entered into his life not alone as an external rallying-point but as a kind of moral agent, crystallizing his ideas and emotions. He was already aware of what he had to fight for. To enroll under the party banner put weapons into his hands, organized the fight. Like a soldier he hearkened to the clarion call that issued from "under the oaks" while he was at college:

> *Resolved*, That, postponing and suspending all differences with regard to political economy and administrative policy, in view of the imminent danger that Kansas and Nebraska will be grasped by slavery, and a thousand miles of slave soil be thus interposed between the free States of the Atlantic and those of the Pacific, we will act cordially and faithfully in unison to avert and repeal this gigantic wrong and shame.
>
> *Resolved*, That in view of the necessity of battling for the first principles of Republican government, and against the schemes of an aristocracy, the most revolting and oppressive with which the earth was ever cursed or man debased, we will co-operate and be known as "Republicans" until the contest be terminated.

The platform of 1856, with the bulk of its resolutions directed at but the one subject, gave him the one cue for his Fremont speech. In the little scrap-book he framed for that effort, the matters underlined are all brought together under an antislavery head. Nobody had then any illusions as to the true status of other questions—questions of "political economy or administrative policy." Jackson's shrewd commentary on the South Carolina Nullifiers whom he squelched in 1833 had put the whole thing in a nutshell. "The tariff was but a pretext; the next will be the slavery or negro question." By the time Reid came into his editorial opportunity the hideous motive of the South had been forced out into the open, where it stalked naked and unashamed. He hated it with a personal hatred, and to read his Xenia paper is to realize how he loved all good Republicans and held in positive abhorrence all the members of the Democracy —refusing to believe that there were any good ones. How could there be any health in a party that trafficked with the Beast? From Buchanan down they were all anathema, and Douglas was their prophet. One sees how, in a crisis like this, belief in a party gets into a man's blood. Republicanism possessed Whitelaw Reid like an evangel. In inflaming his enthusiasm it altered his style. We all know the sort of language sanctioned by that Mesopotamian phrase "political animosity." It took on an accent of its own when it was fed from the white-hot fires of antislavery resolution. Well launched in his paper, Reid incontinently threw overboard the suave rule as to political candidates which had been good enough for him when he spoke for Fremont—"Nothing personal to say against any of them." In this fight, he knew, fine words would butter no parsnips, and he let himself go. It was as easy an indulgence as it was soul-satisfying, but he had to be judgmatic, and it is important to note the conditions which made the policy of the "News" no child's play. Xenia was not by any means all for the negro and the world well lost.

We think of the men of the North who died for the Union as going into battle for the colored brother. Without laboring that trite subject, I may nevertheless emphasize the fact that in Reid's town the colored brother was not loved at all. In a population of something over five thousand there were a thousand blacks. The percentage was too large for the comfort of the whites, and when the new editor got through writing his "Salutatory" he had to reckon with some embarrassing facts. Readers of the "News" objected to having their womenfolk jostled on the street by negroes; their own habits of orderly and cleanly living put them out of humor with negro shiftlessness and dirt; in short, they loathed his ever-increasing pervasiveness, which was offensive in itself and was, besides, giving the town a bad name. Reid laid it down as an axiom that the more or less intimate association of the two races was only productive of continual evil. "Where negroes reside in any great numbers, among the whites, in the existing state of things, both parties are the worse for it, and it is to the interest of both that a separation should be made as soon as practicable." He was sympathetic to the colonization idea then in the air. But I would not make too much of his dilemma. The problem for Xenia was, after all, brushed into a comparatively negligible position by the problem for the nation. Reid did what he could for the susceptibilities of his fellow townsfolk, recurring to them whenever a just opportunity offered; but he was not inclined, nor was he expected, to be thinking of them all the time. There was much else in the seething pot, among other things politics at large, and upon these he flung himself.

CHAPTER IV

THE NOMINATION OF LINCOLN

The negro problem in Xenia might not be soluble in a local election, but the latter always had in it far-reaching possibilities, and in Reid's conduct of his paper his realization of the fact is constantly coming to the surface. No reform could be carried through until Republicanism, everywhere, was set astride the prostrate form of the rival party. The first ticket he had to announce was that framed at the Democratic State convention in the summer of 1858. He printed it with the terse observation that it was the duty of the Republican party to consign it to political oblivion, and thenceforth his columns bristle with detailed arguments to that end, especially with indictments of Democratic villainy. Oddly, as it happened, in this early stage of his political campaigning, his loyalty to his own organization had to undergo a painful strain. Greene County wanted to return its favorite, Aaron Harlan, to Congress. The Republican convention wound up by nominating "Black Tom" Corwin, the "waggoner boy," once governor of the State. It was with decidedly "mingled feelings" that he gave the news. "While we shall glory in supporting Thomas Corwin, it will be no matter for joy that in so doing we must lay aside Aaron Harlan."

The election of Corwin, a trifling incident in the long perspective of that period as we see it now, was then of importance in its relation to national issues. When the party triumphed and Reid printed his jubilate, the most significant sentence in it ran as follows: "This election in

Ohio is one of the most telling rebukes which the present administration has received. The one sole question of dispute was the Kansas policy of Mr. Buchanan. He himself had sunk all other issues in that, he had made his Kansas policy a test, and the people have repudiated it." The same note appears whenever Republican success is to be recorded. It was wide-spread in powerful sections that fall. A majority of fifteen thousand in New York, an overwhelming victory in Massachusetts, successful fights in New Jersey and Delaware, gave him grounds for vociferous rejoicing. "An infatuated President had imagined that the North could be held in party durance forever—the threat had gone forth, 'We will subdue you'—the people had been insulted and defied, and now the answer goes thundering back from every hill and valley, to the miserable, trembling sycophant in the White House—'The North stands redeemed, regenerated and disenthralled.'" Nevertheless, the favorable change in the complexion of Congress left him with no illusions as to the great test still to be faced. The presidential campaign of 1860 would be, he knew, the really crucial conflict. "It will not be absolutely correct," he said, "to reckon Administration defeats as Republican victories, and base our calculations for the future upon those victories. We must remember that our ranks have been greatly swelled by the disaffected among the Democracy, and that to their timely assistance we owe much of our success at the last elections. Will these Douglas Democrats remain with us?" He was bitterly in doubt on that last question and would not let it rest. The Republican party had acquired abundant prestige by its triumphs, it had an undivided front and a clean record, the moral effect of its recent achievements would be incalculable—but so, too, was the potency of Democratic corruption difficult to measure. He was a realist in politics.

He saw things as they were and never ceased working, never left anything to chance. Amid the excitement of winning he still reasoned prudently about the outlook. And not for a moment would he slacken in his campaign of destructive criticism.

Much of the liveliest reading in his diary at this time —for the "News" has really the character of such a document—is due to the furious nature of his attacks. Buchanan is the object of his unqualified contempt. The last message of that inept statesman he published, of course, in extenso, but if he describes it as "formidable" it is only on account of its length. In substance it is beneath notice. "We shall be very much mistaken if the perusal of it does not leave the mind of the reader in a state of deep pity for the poor old man who is endeavoring to control the administration of our government." For Douglas he had no pity at all and could hardly allude to him save in scathing terms. The man is "shuffling and evasive," no statesman in the legitimate sense of the word. "His thoughts and ideas are always those of a politician, his plans are always those of the man of expedients rather than principles. He is an adroit special pleader, skilful in the 'fence of words,' ready on the stump, but to any higher character than this he has no claim." Scarifying the enemy for his presidential ambitions, he springs with whole-souled rancor upon every chance that arises to reveal the disingenuous policy by which they are promoted. That unspeakable thing, Squatter Sovereignty, was never a more grateful topic than when it could be assailed as one of the "Douglas Dodges." Over the fiasco of the Charleston convention he exulted with the more satisfaction because it put one more spoke in the special pleader's wheel. Returning from Columbus, where he had been listening to a speech by Douglas, he describes him as "capable of sounding any depth of falsehood to any altitude of impudence," and adds this vignette:

> As to his manner and apparent ability as a stump speaker, we should be very sorry to think that there are half a dozen lawyers in Xenia who could address an audience so poorly, and control it so little. With every opportunity for it, he awoke no animation, inspired no enthusiasm. The audience appeared to feel flat, in the superlative degree. Mr. Douglas' appearance is coarse and very unprepossessing. His face is essentially vulgar,—a compound of low cunning and sensuality. Altogether he looks and acts to the life the character once given him by the editor of the Cincinnati "Enquirer," that of an "impudent, uncouth, unlicked cub," and his bearing as an orator fairly corresponds. If Mr. Douglas has any desire of making Ohio a Douglas State, he would do well to make his stump-speaking tours through it ("at the invitation of your central committee,"—ahem!) as few and far between as possible. Let but the people hear him, and the idea of supporting a charlatan and demagogue for the highest office in the gift of a mighty nation will sicken and nauseate them.

So much for the counsels of perfection in the little matter of political personalities. I have sufficiently shown how Reid was carried into the thick and murk of the combat, laying about him too wrathfully to think any more of the old amenities. Thus were the men of his time inflamed by their sense of intolerable wrong. Any weapons would do for the flaying of a slave Democracy. Such envenomed personalities as I have cited were produced by conditions, events, which gave to invective an almost sacred warrant. The tragedy of Harper's Ferry offers perhaps the most startling case in point. When that befell, Reid's scorn for the panic-stricken conduct of the Virginian government knew no bounds and he waxed satirical over the exaggerated precautions taken by Buchanan and Wise. But as the strange drama moved headlong to its fatal end his comments take on a tenser solemnity. All over the North the probable consequences of the event were disturbing men's minds. Their conviction was crystallized in Stedman's memorable ballad, published in The Tribune after the conclusion of the trial. It was literally the voice of the people that uttered itself in the stirring stanza:

"But, Virginians, don't do it! for I tell you that the flagon,
Filled with blood of Old Brown's offspring, was first poured by Southern hands;
And each drop from Old Brown's life, like the red gore of the dragon,
May spring up a vengeful Fury, hissing through your slave-worn lands!
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
May trouble you more than ever, when you've nailed his coffin down!"

A fortnight before, in his newspaper, Reid had in common with all antislavery thinkers conceived the same thought and he sounded the same warning. "It will be well," he wrote, "for the Virginians to remember the old saying about the blood of the martyrs. They have the power to hang this poor insane man, frenzied by the maddening outrages their own minions have committed, but the deed will be one of the blackest in Virginia's history, and will be bitterly repented long before its consequences have ceased to operate." He watched the trial in an agony of apprehension and at every step made in it he recurs to the same ominous note. "Let this man be executed as he has been tried, with a shameless partiality and injustice, and with an indecent haste only equalled by the cowardice which prompted it; and his blood will serve as the anointing oil for thousands who will step forward to take up his mantle and do his work!" All that he could bring to bear upon the dreadful subject he poured into his columns. He quoted Wendell Phillips, Lydia Maria Child, and Greeley. He wrote incessantly himself. On the day fixed for Brown's execution he had broken down under the strain. For a month he had to keep away from the paper, resting and getting back his morale.

The task of editing a thriving paper had, indeed, proved heavier than he expected. Within five or six months of his taking charge of the "News" he had been obliged to rearrange his affairs, announcing that the business of the office had so increased that he could no longer give it his personal attention, and it would thenceforth be conducted under the firm name of Gray & Reid. His name appeared at this time as editor alone, and later the partnership was dissolved, leaving business matters entirely in Gray's hands and nothing on his own mind save the administration of the news and editorial columns, especially the latter. It was better for his health and for the flow of his ideas. When he came back to his desk, after the Harper's Ferry excitement, he was restored in strength and happy in a greater freedom. He went on belaboring Buchanan and Douglas. He redoubled the force of his onslaught upon slavery. These phases of his activity I have emphasized as strongly characteristic of the time, but equal if not greater significance attaches to the constructive side of his work. Denunciation of the Democrats represented but the negative aspect of his steady advocacy of the Republican party in general and Abraham Lincoln in particular. His identification with the cause of the latter marks the fundamental drift and the true climax of his first serious venture in journalism.

He was proud of his share in the great campaign of 1860 and was wont to speak of it in later life, not with vainglory, but with gladness that he had been privileged to break a modest lance in Lincoln's cause. Two years before his death, making at the University of Birmingham perhaps the best of all his public addresses, the one on Lincoln, he thus recalled the signal political encounter of his young manhood in Ohio:

> I had the honor of knowing Mr. Lincoln a little before his nomination for the Presidency; in fact, of having been among the first, if not the first, of Republican editors outside of his state to propose his nomination, in preference to our own state candidate. The acquaintance thus formed never of course became intimate—I was only an unimportant boy; but he was always kind to me, and I continued to see him from time to time till I sat near his bier in the White House.

The "unimportant boy" of this passage was at any rate an energetic journalist, politically sagacious, and with a newspaper at his disposal through which to exert a practical influence upon his community. His espousal of Lincoln's candidacy, rising from the appreciation which the latter was everywhere developing, was also stimulated to some extent—and very humanly—by the antipathy he had for Lincoln's foil. We have seen how he detested Douglas. In one of his blistering editorials he speaks of him as descending "to the very bottom of the gutter of humiliation, where he will rot and stink and stink and rot forever." Lincoln's superiority was made only the more manifest as it was contrasted with the ineffable traits of Caliban Douglas. The historic debates instantly captured his imagination. In the earliest of his leaders on the subject, written after the meeting at Freeport in August, 1853, he bears candid tribute to the arts of Douglas, but notes that he had his full match in "the cautious and clear headed Lincoln." The replies of the latter are "carefully prepared and well considered." Those of Douglas make a poor showing. He was not so much confident as hopeful about the contest for the senatorship in Illinois. When Corwin visited that State to take the stump for "the cause of freedom and humanity" he cheered him on. Lincoln, he maintained, had awakened an enthusiasm among the people possibly sufficient to overcome the disadvantage which had been created for him in the districting of the State, which had been so determined as to subserve Democratic interests. But he was not downcast by the result of the election. On the contrary, it gave him renewed courage. In the address on Lincoln from which I have just quoted there is reference to Judah P. Benjamin's explanation in the Senate of how Douglas had lost the friendship of the South. "The Senator's adversary," he said, "stood upon principle and was beaten; and lo! he is the candidate of a mighty party for the Presidency of the United States. The Senator from Illinois faltered. He got the prize for which he faltered; but lo! the grand prize of his ambition slips today from his grasp because of his faltering in his former contest; and his success in the canvass for the Senate, purchased for an ignoble price, has cost him the Presidency of the United States." Benjamin said this in May, 1860, before the presidential campaign had got its momentum. Reid was thinking it eight months previously.

In September, 1859, Lincoln made his fruitful visit to Ohio, nominally to assist the candidacy of Dennison for the governorship, but with the deeper purpose of bringing out signs of Republican progress in the nation. He made important speeches at Columbus and Cincinnati. Announcing the first, Reid made this buoyant proclamation: "Abe Lincoln, of Illinois, the great antagonist of Douglas, who came off from the contest last fall, *defeated, but with the sympathies and high esteem of the entire North*, is to administer an antidote to Douglas' last Squatter Sovereignty effort." He had divined the ultimate effect of Lincoln's seeming indiscretion in asking Douglas a question, an affirmative answer to which could not but win him a temporary advantage. He knew that the debate was bound to be resumed, in one way or another, after the election, and that in the upshot Northern sympathy and esteem for the loser would tell. So when the Columbus speech impended and the railroad was offering to take passengers to the capital and back at half-fare, he wanted to know "how many would go up from Xenia to hear the great champion of the Right," and answered his own question with the surmise that an immense crowd would be there. He was in the thick of it, of course, and came back to fill nearly three columns of his paper with what he characterized as "the calmest, most convincing and most complete refutation of the humbug of Squatter Sovereignty that had yet been given to the public of Ohio." He lauded the speech for its simplicity, its logical accuracy of statement, and for its triumphant success, but his political judgment appears more particularly in the conclusion he drew from it that Lincoln was the one man in the United States to follow the trail of Douglas, to tear the miserable sophistry of that individual's pet doctrine into a thousand tatters, and, in short, to beat the Democracy. This training of all his arguments upon the hard necessities of the case and the development of a working plan that would really work is the element in his own situation which it is important to detach from all others. A moral discrimination between Lincoln and Douglas required no great originality. Everybody in his environment was making it. What was personal to himself was his instinct for the most potential of all the Republican candidates in the field. Giving it free play, he carried the people of Xenia with him.

They gathered in shouting numbers at the station when Lincoln paused there for a few minutes on his way to Dayton and Cincinnati. Some of them even went on to the former place to hear him speak. When they read the Cincinnati speech in the next number of the "News" we may be sure that they approved the enthusiastic editor's remark that it was a masterly production. But as the campaign drew on it was made plain that the preference of the State in general was tending in the direction of Salmon P. Chase, a circumstance having an interesting bearing upon Reid's editorial course. It was about this time that he was made secretary of the county committee, and as such he signed the call for the meeting to prepare for the State convention which would send delegates to Chicago. When the various rivalries were threshed out at Columbus it was presumably his official relation to the organization that dictated a fairly colorless report of the vote which named Chase as the first choice of the Republicans of Ohio for the presidency. He could not well discredit the balloting on this subject. But neither could he, in honesty, applaud it, for he was working all the time for Hivling, the Greene County delegate, and that stout patriot was destined to vote steadily for Lincoln at every ballot in the national convention. Reid might accept the Chase movement without comment, but he took pains to note that the delegates were given no instructions, and a little later he showed clearly enough where he believed the campaign would land the voters. In a leader on the prospects for the nomination he addressed himself with blunt directness to what was for him the question overshadowing all others, the simple question as to who could win. We can imagine the "mingled feelings" of such Chase readers as the "News" had when they came upon observations as implacably logical as these:

> We take it for granted that the Republicans want to nominate a man who can be elected. We utterly scout the idea that the nomination is due to any particular candidate, no matter how fully he may represent the party, how long, or how faithfully, he has de-

> fended our principles. The Republican party is not a pension office, bound to deal out rewards to its members and bounties to those who have been through its wars. If Senator Seward, or Gov. Chase or Gen. Cameron, or anybody else, has served his constituents faithfully in the past he has simply done his duty, and has received therefor, station and emolument. There can be no claims now for back or extra services.
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> The real question for the Chicago convention to decide is: Who is that clear, unquestioned, undoubted Republican, who is fully qualified for the office of President and who, from location, personal popularity, or any other circumstance, has the best chance of carrying enough States to secure his election? We consider every State that went for Fremont in '56 safe now, unless an absolutely suicidal course should be taken at Chicago. On the four doubtful Northern States, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Indiana and Illinois, everything depends. What we want is a sound, able, unquestioned Republican, who can carry those States. Give us such a candidate and we shall not concern ourselves very much about his location. If Seward can do it, we shall support him most heartily; if Chase or McLean can do it, we shall support either, and rejoice that Ohio is able to give a second President to the nation; if, as we now believe, Abraham Lincoln shall be found better to combine the requisites of earnest Republicanism, fitness and availability, we shall support him, in the faith that the long sought revolution in our National Administration will be certainly and fully attained.

The sting of this editorial resided in its tail. All Ohio was for Chase. No other paper in the State, as we have seen from Reid's recollections, was dreaming of going to Illinois for a candidate, and for him to do so was not only to run counter to the prevailing tide but to invite the resentment of a man with whom he had every reason to remain on friendly terms. He knew that his attitude would vex Chase and in this his expectation was confirmed. The governor did not like the young editor's disinterested handling of the subject, with its candidly philosophical assertion that a well-rewarded public servant had no vested interest in public office. It certainly added no sweetness to the pill which had been administered in the State convention. Chase's diary contains a pointed reference to the subject, which shows, by implication, how tangible an influence a paper like the "News" could wield:

> The Republicans of Ohio honored me by a declaration of their preference in the State convention, which was held to appoint delegates at large to the nominating convention. The Ohio convention, however, did not nominate, as did many other State conventions, the district delegates, but left the selection of these to district conventions. This gave an opportunity to the partisans of other candidates to foment divisions, and secure the selection in several districts of delegates unfriendly to me. The result was the division of the Ohio delegates in the nominating convention and the destruction of their influence. Without its united support there was not much ground for expecting much support from other delegations, in which I had numerous friends ready to unite with the Ohio delegation had that delegation been itself united.

Chase, as is well known, went gallantly on the stump for Lincoln, and the bitterness which he felt toward Reid was shortly dissipated. He was himself of too large a caliber to harbor enmity, and he probably saw, too, as the campaign moved on, that Reid never in his life did a better day's work than that which aided in sending Hivling to Chicago. As later pages in this book will develop, the two became very close friends. Meanwhile the younger man was oblivious to all personal considerations in his conviction that a winning candidate had to be picked and that Lincoln was the only possible choice. When May arrived and he scanned the reports of the earlier proceedings of the convention, he observed with gusto the signs that "Lincoln was looming up," and his cup o'erbrimmed when the ticket at last was settled. He had contrived, somehow, to secure for the "News" a special correspondent on the scene, and that happy man could hardly keep his head. "The ticket," he wrote in ecstasy, "the ticket, Reid, so representative—so manly—so honest—so dignified—so hearty—so sound—

that is the thing, and I give you, in common with all the Free Press everywhere, joy of its happy and auspicious birth. Three cheers for the nominees!" It was hard for the recipient of words like these to have to wait until the news was cold to express his own feelings. Thus they went into his paper:

> The last issue of the "News" had not reached half its readers when the glad tidings were brought over the wires that the candidate whom we have all along believed best to unite ability and availability had been nominated for the Presidency by the Chicago Convention.
>
> Our readers need not be assured of the hearty joy with which we have received the news of this nomination. Recognizing in Abraham Lincoln one of the most logical and clear-headed of our statesmen, dowered with a magnificent intellect, all the more completely developed that its self-culture has progressed amid the most unfavorable circumstances; regarding him as commended alike by the sound fidelity of his principles and by the brevity and clearness of his political record, and believing that his nomination insures at least one of the four doubtful States, while it renders success highly probable in the other three, we cannot but pronounce the choice of the Chicago Convention the very best and the very wisest. Already all sections of the party have united upon it. The most ardent advocate of Seward is perfectly satisfied with the sterling and outspoken Republicanism of Lincoln. The most prudent and conservative adherent of Bates or McLean can urge no objection to his record or position. With him as our standard-bearer we are all harmonized, and with united front we can march forward to our undoubted victory.
>
> We regard Mr. Lincoln as possessing more elements of popularity than any other candidate that could have been selected from the whole array of Republican statesmen and politicians. Sprung from the ranks, he is pre-eminently a Man of the People. Inheriting literally nothing but an honest name, and beginning life as a farm-laborer, he has risen to the proud position of the foremost lawyer in Illinois, and now chosen leader of the great Republican party. Between such beginning and such ripe completion of achievement, we need not say how much of manly toil and stern endurance there lies. In all his career, as the prairie farmer, as the Macon county rail-splitter, as the Ohio flat-boatman, as the militia captain in the Black Hawk war, as the western surveyor, as the law student, poring over his borrowed books by the flickering light of the fire-place,

and trudging on foot for twenty miles to his recitations; then as the rising member of the Legislature, as the leader of the Illinois Whigs, as the faithful follower of Henry Clay in the National Congress, as the head of the bar in the State of his adoption, as the chosen champion of his party and the brilliant contestant for Senatorial honors, —in all this career, so full of romantic success and worthily-won laurels, we see the elements for a popular enthusiasm, already swelling from State to State, which will bear forward on the topmost wave of triumph, this Child of the People to the proudest honors the People have to bestow.

As to the manner in which he will perform the high duties of the office which the nation is about to confer, we need only quote the testimony of this great antagonist. Said Senator Douglas: "Mr. Lincoln is one of those peculiar men that has performed with admirable skill in every occupation he ever attempted;" and we may add, that the man who unaided and alone has risen from a western rail-splitter to the position Abraham Lincoln now occupies, will do honor to any post he may be called to fill.

Xenia took the news as he took it. When he got his special despatch he posted it outside the office as a bulletin and watched the crowd that quickly gathered. A majority of the Republicans in the town were "original Lincoln men." As he savored their triumph with them it made him laugh to observe "the sudden discovery made by many that *they* had been original Lincoln men too." The Democrats naturally pulled long faces and some of them tried to impugn the despatch as a hoax, "not having sense enough apparently to know that a newspaper office was not likely to damage its reputation for reliability by promulgating such intelligence without being assured of its correctness." As the day wore on the last doubters subsided. "In the evening Tecumseh's Artillery was brought out, and round after round woke the echoes far and near, and bore the glad news to the surrounding country that the President for 1860–64 had at last been chosen." He could feel that in some small, obscure, but still recognizable measure it had been his work.

The satisfaction and the incentive were very great. He had correctly interpreted the times to his readers. In the scant two years of his management the "News" had been a steady lamp to Republican voters within the scope of its influence. They had heeded his opinions, recognized his leadership. Now he had something to show for it. In the flush of victory he thought first of pursuing the fight, not only in the paper but out of it, and once more as secretary of the central committee he issued a call to the faithful. Three weeks after the nomination the county was to select delegates for the State convention at which ticket and platform would be ratified, and in the meantime there was much to be done in the general organization of the campaign. Reid was full of it, and so far as the spirit was concerned could have gone on writing unnumbered leaders for Lincoln. But the one I have quoted was to prove the last. Another lapse in his health sent him off to the woods, and when he returned it was not to edit the "News." In his eulogium of the great candidate he wrote his own valedictory as a journalist in Xenia.

CHAPTER V

THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

In a brief series of letters to the Cincinnati "Gazette," Reid recorded some of his adventures in the Northwest in the summer of 1860. Joe Millikin went with him. They made a light-hearted pair, one still a young collegian, the other "a wandering member of the Press-gang," tired, and hungry for a holiday; but they mapped out an heroic programme, aiming at nothing less than Lake Itasca in Minnesota, the source of the Mississippi. In the course of their travels they attached themselves to a party traversing that region with serious purpose, and earned something of the status of explorers. Crow Wing was then the northernmost settlement on the river. The fabulous growth of Duluth, with all the traffic on the lakes that has since developed, was not to be dreamed of by the wildest visionary when Reid and his comrade stood upon its site. His home State seemed rooted in antiquity as he left it behind him. Some things in Ohio were doubtless new, but in Minnesota everything was newer, and what interested him most were the signs of a young commonwealth just beginning to grow. The journalistic instinct would not down. He was willing to listen to flamboyant fish stories and to try his luck in the little lakes around St. Paul, which were supposed to be so full that there was hardly room left for the water. But he gave a more attentive ear to the even more romantic tales of real-estate booms up and down the river, and cynically checked them with what he saw. When he paused in a town he noted its area and population. His letters are strong on facts.

From Cincinnati to St. Louis the journey was made by rail. Then followed a week's dawdling up the Mississippi to St. Paul. Reid was not greatly impressed by the river life, around which even at that time legend had begun to cluster. There were no John Oakhursts amongst the gamblers on board. The very mixed crowd had an unconventional Western air, but there was nothing really picturesque about it. The early settlers in evidence were tough, rugged types, and their wives and daughters were not any too good-looking. It was borne in upon the pilgrims with gentle melancholy that while there might be plenty of pretty women in the West, they didn't travel on steamboats. But it was amusing to go ashore when there was a stop at some little town or at a clearing, to take on firewood, and it was both amusing and instructive to observe the tragi-comic fate of towns which had been laid out in the middle of the prairie as though for the population of a Chicago. From the constant spoiling of good farm lands along the river, to make villages and specious "corner lots," he concluded that every one in that part of the West had gone crazy. It was a comfort to get to St. Paul, where life was more rationalized. Once through with the sights of St. Paul they went on to St. Anthony and thence by stage-coach to St. Cloud, Crow Wing, and the wilderness—in Joe Millikin's breezy words, "big-breeched, red-shirted, long-knived, big-pistolled, mosquito-bedevilled and boil-tormented." They were very happy. There was a thrill in navigating the Mississippi, as there was in sleeping in log cabins and wigwams or out under the pines. The Chippewas and Sioux were interesting companions. For a little while they were the guests of a notable chief, Hole-in-the-Day. What the rough life did for him Reid afterward explained in a letter to his brother: "My trip to Minnesota did me little good physically. It was too hard for me; but it did me good by throwing all my thoughts into a new channel and making me forget all about my sickness." An effort of the will had something to do with this salutary detachment. In another letter to Gavin he says: "My motto is, never believe unpleasant things till you have to. Always look on the bright side if there is any." His vacation in the woods, bare of any striking incidents, at least exposes his fidelity to his motto. He lost nothing of his gayety because all through the holiday he was aware of the problem awaiting him at home, the problem of his career.

We have seen how on the main point it had been solved, how his work in the campaign for Lincoln had stamped him as an effective journalist. It had also made him acquainted with what he playfully called "the miseries of an editor's life." He said something about them to Joe Millikin by the camp-fire, and when in the winter that cheerful sage decided to go to Europe he remembered their talks and bade his friend farewell with this meaning adjuration: "Don't kill yourself on any more country papers!" He took the advice. It had been hard to give up his interest in the "News," and on his return it was harder to forego the warfare of the pen, carried on from the commanding position in which an editorial chair is placed. For a short time he dallied with the idea of following Millikin abroad. Then the whole question was postponed by the fall elections. Taking up again his secretaryship of the county committee, he gave all his fighting powers to the campaign. A famous contribution made by the younger men in the United States was the organization of companies of "Wide-Awakes," or torchlight paraders. Reid got in touch with the leader of the body in Cincinnati and helped to start a local company. He made stump speeches himself and organized meetings for which he sought celebrated orators; Sumner, John Sherman, and Thomas Ewing were among those he tried to get. The earliest souvenir of the relations with public men which were to fill his life is a friendly note from the Massachusetts statesman.

In his work on the spot, the practical work of "getting the vote out," he had one more opportunity to write what was really another editorial, one of those fervid appeals which we have observed him making in the "News" during the campaign for the nomination. It fell to him, as secretary, to compose the address of the committee to the men of Greene County, the pencilled draft of which he treasured amongst the relics of his youth. It runs as follows:

> We need not, we are sure, urge upon you the importance of this election. The day to which we have been looking eagerly forward ever since the organization of our party is now upon us,—the day when we have the means to gain control in the Federal government, if we but put forth the power we possess. After so many years of patient labor shall we now fail to "go in and take possession?"
>
> Our candidates are now the only ones that have any chance whatever of election by the people, as the recent elections in Pennsylvania and Indiana, the most important of the so-called "doubtful States," clearly show. Vote for Lincoln and Hamlin and you vote for an election by the People, of the People's choice; vote for any of the other candidates and you cast your influence for the defeat of a choice by the people, and for the fearful confusion and anarchy tenfold worse than that which characterized the election of Speaker last winter,—that must surely follow a scramble for the Presidency in the American Congress. If ever this country shall be in danger of Disunion it will be not from the constitutional election of an honest and incorruptible statesman, but from the conflict of mad passions, the collisions, the imminent danger of bloodshed and civil war, that such a warfare in Congress would occasion. Will you not do all in your power to avert such a calamity, and to promote an election by the people?
>
> There is danger to the Republican party from over-confidence.

> Remember, the fight is not yet over. An absence of a hundred voters in each county—and we can point to a single one of our twelve townships, not one of the largest, either, in which over thirty Republican voters were absent from the polls at the October election—might yet turn the scale in Ohio. Besides, Ohio has already fallen far behind even Pennsylvania in its majority. Republicans, are you willing that new recruits should thus march in advance of old veterans?

He was riding on the crest of the wave as this manifesto was issued, and only a few days later the results of the election gave him once again the elation of victory, the pride of achievement. At almost the same instant he entered upon a period of depression. There was nothing further for him to do in politics, and in journalism there was nothing available that he wanted. A chance to teach as an assistant in a Cincinnati academy flickered on the horizon and went out. Settling down to read at the homestead, he found that there was no one at hand to look after the little district school. The neighbors begged him to take charge for a couple of months, and he did so, but it bored him terribly. He could scarce live up to that motto of his: "Always look on the bright side if there is any." There wasn't any. News of his lowered spirits reached a friend of the family in the northern part of the State, a clergyman, and he deemed the moment ripe for an appeal to Reid to enter the church. "I learned from your father," he wrote, "that it is possible you may lose your last year's labors. This would be grievous indeed. I know how faithfully you wrought, and how well. There is a lesson in all this misfortune. You have been entrusted with talents which can be turned to far better account than expounding and defending our political creed." He made this reply:

> You are right in saying that this is not the first time the subject of studying for the ministry has been brought before me. Without denying the force of any of the arguments you have urged, I may

> say briefly that I long ago concluded that it were worse than folly for any man to enter upon that sacred and awful office without a distinct and unmistakable Divine Call thereto. Such a Call I have never felt as made upon myself and all my reflections on the subject since the receipt of your letter (and they have been neither few nor hasty) have but confirmed the opinion I had formed before.
>
> Let me add one word more. All these appeals to me to enter the Ministry seem to be based upon an idea that my talents are of a somewhat superior order. I am not usually blamed for distrust of my own abilities, and yet I must be allowed to say, without the slightest affectation of mock-modesty, that my friends have always very greatly over-rated whatever talents I may possess. I can, I think, estimate myself more justly than others can, and I certainly have never regarded my abilities as any special acquisition to any cause.

At the time of writing this letter, indeed, he had made his decision, as he had made it in the face of Jim Liggett's urgings—a decision for journalism. All through the winter he had watched for an opportunity to join one of the Cincinnati papers. He applied for the post of news editor on the "Enquirer" the moment he heard that it was vacant, but his letter arrived a day too late. Shortly afterward he tackled the "Press," again in vain. But even while the proprietors of that journal were keeping him on tenter-hooks, delaying their reply for several weeks, the tide turned, and turned with a vengeance. The Cincinnati "Times" engaged him to serve as its legislative correspondent at Columbus, paying him five dollars a week for a daily letter. He began the work in the middle of March, 1861. It was but started when he made a similar arrangement with the Cleveland "Herald"—similar save for the bright detail that from this source he received fifteen dollars a week—and before the month was out he had added the Cincinnati "Gazette" to his group of papers, with a weekly salary as large as the two others combined. Since it cost him only five dollars a week to live he was in affluence. He assumed undismayed the job of turning out three letters a day on the same topics. It was for his work on the "Gazette" that he adopted the pseudonym of "Agate," with which he was later to make so deep an impression as war correspondent. On his travels in the Northwest he had picked up a great many agates in the vicinity of Agate Bay and other points on Lake Superior, and had taken a fancy to the stone. This was the origin of his choice of a signature, which also, in recalling the name of a kind of type, kept in remembrance his experience as a printer.

Howells, the novelist, whose father Reid succeeded in the service of the "Gazette," knew him at this time and has thus portrayed him: "I remember him a tall, graceful youth with an enviable black moustache and imperial, wearing his hair long in the Southern fashion, and carrying himself with the native grace which availed him in a worldly progress scarcely interrupted to the end." He came to his new task in a new or, at any rate, rather changed mood. The miscellaneous drudgery of his early days on the "News" had so soon been subordinated to the larger duty of dealing in leading articles with political questions that he had unconsciously taken for granted a similar editorial authority in his next niche, wherever that might be. Though he still believed the news to be the all-important ingredient in the making of a newspaper, his zeal in gathering it was equalled by his inclination to comment upon it. In a reminiscence told in later years he recalled how the confusion of ideas at that time was put out of his head. "When I wanted to leave country editing," he said, "and become connected with some city press, I hinted to my friend and namesake, Henry Reed, one of the most trenchant writers in the journalism of the West, that I didn't want to do reporting. 'Youngster,' was the consolatory reply, 'if anybody wants to succeed he must do whatever work he can get to do, and do it better than it has been done. Report the law courts, fires, prize fights, anything they set you at, and do your very best every time. That's what I did, and you have no right to expect anything else.'"

If the smallest dubiety lingered in his mind it disappeared before the excitements of the session. Chase having entered Lincoln's cabinet, some one had to be elected to his chair in the Senate at Washington, and Reid began his letters just as the contest was opened. The secret caucus summoned in the hall of the House promptly put him on his mettle. "Reporters were rigidly excluded, but, as is usual in such cases, the more carefully they were warned off, the better posted they were." He gave plenty of details in his daily record of the prolonged fight from which John Sherman finally emerged the victor. The signature of "Agate" soon commanded respect. Reid's reports were compact and vivid. He knew how to sift from the debates such matter as would appeal to distant readers, and where to make pungent comment. Gibes at the Democracy in general were forever in order and he watched for the speech or vote by a member of that party which would permit a particular application. After the struggle for the senatorship was concluded he had to make the best of a rather prosaic routine, and personalities were welcome. But most of the subjects coming up during his few months at Columbus were obliterated by the war. He went there, as I have said, in March. Sumter was fired on within a month, and, of course, the trouble in South Carolina had begun before the previous year was out. His letters, which faithfully reflect the temper of the period, preserve especially the strange, ambiguous mood which prevailed.

The war which everybody expected was nevertheless met as the most astounding of surprises when it came. I have shown how Reid had had forebodings of it from his college days, yet he was almost incredulous of its actual onset. The first news from Charleston Harbor on the fateful April 12th could not persuade him. He thought the despatches were bogus! All Columbus was of much the same opinion—for a few hours. The crisis was unbelievable. In the legislature military appropriations were blocked by Democrats whose minds were not merely clouded by party feeling but subject, like all others, to the hallucination that what had happened simply could not happen. As the storm fell and there was no mistaking its import, every man in the town had to remake his world overnight. The old story which is the story of cities and towns all over the North—of incredulity, of stunned emotions, of hurried, confused preparation, and, amongst individuals, of heart-stirring choice—was unfolded before Reid's eyes with the more dramatic effect because of the peculiar position of his State. There could be no question of where Ohio stood on the national issue. Simon Cameron's despatch to the governor, demanding thirteen regiments of militia for immediate service, brought an instant response, and Dennison's proclamation calling for volunteers raised men up as if from the ground. But the danger on the border gave to patriotism a sharper edge. Reid saw for himself how the war was brought home to the people around him by the situation which in his "Ohio in the War" he later sketched in these words:

> Along four hundred and thirty-six miles Ohio bounded Slave States; and at every point in the whole distance was liable to invasion. On the south-eastern border lay the State of Virginia, already threatening to secede, and soon to become the main bulwark of the Rebel cause. On the southern border lay the State of Kentucky, already furnishing recruits by the regiment to the Rebel army, and

soon to threaten yet greater dangers. To these States the first earnest glances of the Governor were turned. The attitude of Virginia was the more alarming, and her geographical position made her hostility a thing of grave purport. Thrust northward into the space between Pennsylvania and Ohio like a wedge, she almost divided the loyal part of the nation into two separate fragments. Here, as an acute military critic has since observed, was the most offensive portion of the whole Rebel frontier. Behind the natural fortification of the mountains the communication with Richmond and the whole South was secure.

Doubly concerned, then, for the Union and for her own integrity as a State—this latter a factor in the problem never more jealously guarded than at that precise moment in American history—Ohio was plunged at once into the thick of the war, and Columbus, naturally, was the focal point. Reporting the debates over the war bill, Reid rushed to expose recalcitrant members. The single "No" heard in the Senate he recorded with this observation: "Mark the man who voted against the defense of his State and nation, and let the craven reap the heritage of infamy he has so fairly won." The son of this man balanced his father's vote by enlisting in the ranks. The backslider himself presently asked leave to change his vote. He, and others, began to hear from "back home," and the "Gazette's" correspondent described the ensuing posture of affairs with a vigor of which I may give a concise specimen:

> The most uneasy politicians ever seen in this city were the Democrats yesterday afternoon. They had begun to hear from their constituents. Gamble received a dispatch from some of the most prominent men among his constituents, telling him "for God's sake, vote men and money to any extent, at once." . . . The operation was not pleasant; they wanted to stop it—the sooner the better. The leaders were terrified at the great ground swell of popular damnation that was sweeping up to overwhelm them, and they suddenly reversed the caucus workings. Through the passages, and in quiet groups through the hall, they were laboring with the refractory members, and doing their best to bring them into the ranks. They

> even proposed a bargain with the Republicans. They would forget or forego their extraordinary conscientious objections to the suspension of the rules, if the Republicans would only promise not to prevent them from delaying action by debate, by the use of the previous question. The Republicans sternly told them the time for such agreements was past; they had now no bargains to make. And so the poor partisans, swept from their old moorings and drifting blindly before the storm they had insanely provoked, were fain to put into the nearest place of security. It was astonishing how suddenly their views had changed. Men who had protested that the War bill was an infernal outrage, had experienced a change of heart. Their desires had been gratified—every man of them had had the felicity of hearing from his constituents.

This was what his paper wanted. The capitol was the centre of the most important of current news for Ohioans. He was eagerly concerned with the turmoil in the streets and constantly sprinkled through his letters the little human incidents showing more tangibly than anything else how the "fighting fever" had taken possession of the town. The volunteers already in camp were offered money to give up their places to men who feared they had come too late. A country fellow talking secession on the sidewalk was first hustled by the crowd, and then only saved from lynching by the artfulness of his friends in spiriting him away. There were droll stories to be told. Amid the general upsetting of all routine a soldier found it convenient to write his love-letter at a senator's desk, forgot it there, and so was discovered to have wound up by telling his sweetheart that he didn't intend to come home until he had Jeff Davis's heart in his breeches pocket. A woman of Clyde sent a huge bass drum to the governor, and with it a long rope for the hanging of the rebel leader. The captain of a company on its way to camp was worried about the blankets furnished them for the night at a stopping-place and ordered that all were to be returned to him in the morning. His men handed back all that had been supplied to them—and forty-seven more. Then there is the anecdote of the man from Mississippi who boarded a troop-train, took stock of the volunteers, and quickly thought the thing over. He stepped off at the next station and telegraphed to his brother: "I have seen some of the northern troops. Pack up at once and bring our sister north without a day's delay." Again and again the letters celebrate the swiftness with which the armies were gathering and the stern ardor with which they faced the sacrifice. Thirteen regiments had been called for. Promises of material for twenty poured into Columbus.

Reid emphasizes the spirit of dedication in which these Americans came forward, paints them kneeling in prayer, and in very nearly the same breath he discusses the food provided for them and its cost, casting critical glances in the direction of the quartermaster's department. He had taken Henry Reed's counsel to heart. That these earliest of "Agate's" despatches revive the very traits of a typical American town in the first throes of the war is obviously due to this fact. His letters reveal the expert reporter. Of the three papers in which they were printed, the Cincinnati "Gazette" was the one to decide that it wanted the writer permanently on its staff. At the end of the legislative session, in May, he was offered the desk of city editor, and at once took up its duties. Thenceforth, at different times, he was to do a good deal of work, of various kinds, in the office. At the outset, however, he could do little more than get acquainted with his new post. In June he was sent to the war.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE FIELD

In distinguishing between the old and new traditions of war correspondence it is customary to lay stress upon two cardinal factors—the reporter's status in the field, and the facilities available for the prosecution of his work and the transmission of his despatches. The very mixed conditions under which this arm of journalism was invented are clearly exposed in the history of George Wilkins Kendall, who reported for the New Orleans "Picayune" our war with Mexico. His status was ideal. Nobody complained if he took part in a fight. When he not only did so but seized an enemy flag and brought it out of action, he was cheerfully allowed to keep it as a souvenir. Worth put him on his staff and named him appreciatively in his reports. But Kendall starved in the midst of plenty. Privileged to see everything, to gather at first hand news for which the whole country was feverishly waiting, he had to send it by courier and ship! In 1846–47 there was no telegraph-wire nearer him than at Washington. To-day the war correspondent, with every resource of science up his sleeve, would nevertheless be willing to give a good two-thirds of his outfit for a little of Kendall's luck in getting on the spot. He, poor wight, is far less welcome, being grudgingly allowed to approach only the fringes of battle, and, when he is fortunate enough to find something to write about, he has still to reckon with an implacable censor.

Reid began his career as a war correspondent just as a new era for the craft was coming in, more favorable than any before it, if not altogether without pains and penalties. The telegraph was there. When not immediately accessible it was, at all events, within the reach of a man with a good horse. The railroads were of enormous service when a correspondent chose, for one reason or another, to go home with his news, writing it on the way. In the field, conditions varied. The press was uncomfortably candid from the beginning, and trouble ensued between it and more than one officer. The censorship, too, was not long delayed in working hardship for the newspaper men. Stanton was a fearful thorn in their sides. And yet, first and last, they enjoyed chances which their followers in recent wars can read about only with wonderment and envy. Smalley's experience at Antietam, carrying orders for Hooker, is merely unthinkable as befalling any correspondent, no matter how favored, at the battle of the Marne. "Looking about him for an officer he saw me and said, 'Who are you?' I told him. 'Will you take an order for me?' 'Certainly.' There was a regiment which seemed wavering and had fallen a little back. 'Tell the colonel of that regiment to take his men to the front and keep them there.' I gave the order." Imagine a correspondent on the French battle-field, unknown to the general save as he identified himself, being intrusted with a message of such moment, and in such fashion!

The Cincinnati "Gazette" was in the forefront of the journalistic revolution developed by the war; it held up its representative's hands, and as these pages will show, Reid was one of those who gave a new standing to his new profession. Yet it is noteworthy that for him it was not a new profession in the later, more specialized sense of the term. Since his day we have come to regard the war correspondent as a type apart, who lies fallow between campaigns or retells his achievements in books and lectures, and at all times belongs, in many instances, as much to the magazines or to some syndicate as to a particular newspaper. This kind of "expert" was unheard of when the Civil War began. Reid was a war correspondent, proud of the title, and aware of the specific technic expected of him. It was as an aide-de-camp on the staff of the commanding general that, with the rank of captain, he made his first campaign. He had the fullest appreciation of his prerogatives, opportunities, and duties. But they were all in the day's work, and the distinctive note of his war correspondence is to be traced to the manner in which he took it up and dropped it, took it up again and dropped it again, and so over a protracted period adjusted it to other tasks and to the steady working out of his newspaper career. He wrote his last despatch as legislative correspondent at Columbus on May 12th, 1861. Serving for a short time as city editor of the "Gazette," he proceeded to the front in West Virginia early in June, and thenceforth for some months he was with the army at numerous points. But in midsummer he "did" the Democratic State convention at Columbus, in October he took the place of the managing editor at the office for a week, and by the end of the year, having in the meantime observed the war in Kentucky, he was once more at his desk, this time writing editorials and organizing the field staff which it had become necessary for the paper to employ.

These instances, which might easily be multiplied, will suffice to foreshadow the character of Reid's service during the war. It was arduous, dramatic, full of peril, and tinctured with the vital force of a great passage in history—and it was part of a broader progress. Also—and this, likewise, is characteristic of both the man and the period—it got something of its color from Reid's upbringing and from his experience as the editor of an antislavery paper. He was of the North, and the rebels were his personal enemies. If the war was for him, as any war is bound to be for the correspondent, a spectacle to be disinterestedly described, it was none the less in his eyes the process, besides, by which the country was to be purged of an infamous evil. This point of view it was that lent to his despatches a good deal of their emotional vigor. Every war correspondent is in the nature of things a partisan. Reid's reports of battles, like his editorials on Lincoln, are not only records of fact but give expression to his belief in a cause.

He was fortunate, therefore, in his first campaign, the purpose of which made a peculiarly clean-cut appeal to his sentiments as an Ohioan and a defender of the Union. Later on, as events took a wider sweep, given military actions were chapters in a long sequence, each to be apprehended at close range for its own sake, with only a roughly speculative idea at the back of the writer's mind as to its ultimate relation to the large aim of the war. In West Virginia the issue was sharply defined. It meant the rescue of that part of a State which was tending strongly toward the Union, from that other part which was unmistakably for secession. Reid knew when he started for the front that the object of the campaign was to make West Virginia what he afterward designated it in an historical passage on the subject, the gift of Ohio to the nation. In the preceding chapter I have shown why Ohio was nervous about her border. Governor Dennison was the more disposed to act quickly there, to the southeast, because he was well apprised of the Union sentiment crystallizing in that direction. The slaveholding population of Virginia was infinitely larger in the eastern than in the western section of the State, a fact which would alone account for the divergence of political feeling between the two regions. Hence an advance across the Ohio River, pushed well into the interior, would achieve a double purpose. In forcing the rebels over the mountain ranges, behind which barrier it would not be very difficult to keep them, security from a military point of view would be obtained. At the same time the loyal Virginians would be enabled to work out their destiny as the citizens of a separate State. The campaign was, among other things, an indispensable collaborative agent in the proceedings of the Wheeling convention.

It is a trait, a mark of his editorial habit of mind, that Reid was thoroughly conscious of this, and always in his letters feeling the pulse of the inhabitants. Many of the latter declared themselves on the instant and with every manifestation of joy. The national colors floated from poor log cabins, women in the mountains used the Stars and Stripes as aprons and handkerchiefs, and when the people had no money to buy flags they fashioned them out of calico. In the towns potential secessionists lay low and had to be smoked out. One officer had a clever way of dealing with the shifty tribe. A member of it applied to him for a pass, whereupon this colloquy ensued:

> "Certainly, sir, you shall have it. Hold up your right hand, if you please." And without a word of explanation, the Major proceeded to administer the oath of allegiance! He had not got half through it, when the secessionist exclaimed: "Stop! I won't take that." "Very well, sir," replied Major Oakes; "I'm sorry for you, then, but you can't go down to Philippi." And he didn't go.

The campaign moved slowly. After the first skirmish at Philippi, the troops under General Morris settled down to await the operation of General McClellan's strategy. At Grafton, where headquarters were established, Reid gathered the usual incidents of camp life, watched the sifting of the inhabitants into good and bad patriots, and took note of what was being done or left undone as to the welfare of the troops. When their trousers went to pieces before his eyes he reported the constituents of those specious garments—factory clippings and sweepings, almost as quick to wear out as wrapping-paper—and he sent on a specimen of the "cloth" to his paper. "Put it up in the counting room," he wrote, "and let Ohioans see how Ohio troops in the field are clothed." A little later some shoes belonging to rebels captured at Philippi gave him the cold comfort of proving that Southern army contractors had nothing to learn from their Yankee brethren. The soles were made of wood, glued to the uppers, and covered with stained paper. His waiting letters are full, of course, of camp humors, the excitements of "eye-balling," the art, in which the troopers excelled, of "confisticating" a comrade's possessions, and the bursting ardor of every man and officer in the place. It is a captain of Hoosiers who takes the palm in his collection of anecdotes and oddities. "Close up, boys!" he shouted. "If the enemy were to fire on you when you're straggling along that way, they couldn't hit a d—d one of you! Close up!" But this sort of thing made a sorry substitute for action. What Reid and everybody else expected, after the initial successful brush with the rebels, is reflected in this letter written from Grafton to his brother:

> I am just on the point of starting for Philippi, with Gen. Morris and his staff. A battle is expected there in a day or two, more important and bloody than any since the beginning of the insurrection. The road has now become exceedingly dangerous. The story is that three Ohioans were shot down on it this afternoon. It is utterly impossible for me to predict my future movements. I have orders to keep with the advance of the army and hope to be at Richmond before the summer is over. I go with any of the Generals, as circumstances may dictate. Gen. Morris is the senior Brigadier, and will command at the approaching battle, unless Gen. McClellan comes over.

He was too sanguine. McClellan was a little more than leisurely in coming over. He delayed after the Philippi skirmish as he had delayed before it, and Reid's despatches increasingly exhibit the impatience under which the little army chafed. It is in this that they throw a modest side-light on one of the notable figures of the war. McClellan's foible long since became an old story. But it is interesting to observe it as it is discovered in Reid's correspondence. At the beginning all was confidence in the new departmental commander. It took a long time to shake the general faith. Reid was placed by circumstances in a position to get acquainted very early with McClellan's curious habit of action—or inaction—and "the strange torpor that subsequently befel the Army of the Potomac" was no surprise to him. He had a foretaste of it in this campaign.

The battle which had seemed imminent when he wrote to his brother late in June did not materialize until the middle of July. The enemy, under Garnett, was encamped at Laurel Hill. McClellan finally proposed to move upon him in two columns, sending one, with General Morris, against his front, and himself taking the other around to the rear. The trap was judiciously planned, but while Morris executed his part of it, McClellan failed to develop his own through a sufficiently expeditious support of the advance he had thrown out under General Rosecrans. The latter, to be sure, accomplished quite enough in the action he fought at Rich Mountain for the news of it to alarm Garnett and cause him to evacuate his position at Laurel Hill; but in the absence of proper timely co-operation there Morris's pursuit won far less than should have fallen to it. The battle of Carrick's Ford, where Garnett turned to fight a rear-guard action, resulted in his death and the demoralization of his troops. It did not prevent the majority of the latter from making their escape. "And this," exclaimed Reid, "is the culmination of the brilliant Generalship which the journals of the sensational persuasion have been besmearing with such nauseous flattery." The most interesting disclosure of his own quality as a war correspondent, fresh to his task, is his accurate "sizing up" of McClellan. How he met the test imposed upon his reporter's faculty by his first battle I may show in the following:

> The enemy appeared to be ignorant of the nearness of our advance, till the careless discharge of a gun aroused them, and they at once pushed forward. Our troops rushed on with renewed impetuosity, till at the third ford of the Cheat they came in sight of their train, apparently "stalled" in the river. As Col. Steedman advanced with the Ohio Fourteenth, the teamsters or soldiers in the wagons called out: "Come on, we'll surrender." On the other side of the river, and just above the ford, was a high bluff, the brink fringed with a thicket of laurel. Just as the Fourteenth came fairly in front of this bluff, and before they had reached the ford, Gen. Garnett sprang up on the very brink, waved his hat, and shouted, "Hurrah for Jeff. Davis." The words were scarcely out of his mouth till the whole force, which had been concealed in an ambuscade on the bluff, poured down a perfect storm of bullets on the Fourteenth, and two of their rifled cannon opened fire.
>
> The Fourteenth stood up like regulars, without flinching, and responded with as effective a fire as possible, considering the unfavourable situation of the enemy. Col. Barnett speedily got his cannon into position, and returned the fire of their artillery. Meantime Col. Milroy advanced with the Ninth Indiana, and formed in line of battle on Steedman's left, while Col. Dumont was ordered to ascend an apparently precipitous bank, some two hundred yards up the river, and turn the enemy's flank. The ascent was almost impossible, but the gallant Colonel had got up with two of his companions, when, by some mistake, Capt. Benham, who had been informed that the ascent could not be made, ordered him to proceed down the river with his regiment and turn the other flank of the enemy. Right down the stony bed of the river went the gallant Seventh, just between the fires of both sides. Coming out between the baggage wagons standing in the fords they turned up toward the enemy, when the rebels precipitately deserted their fine position and fled. The Seventh pursued—having by means of this

flank movement got in advance of the Fourteenth Ohio—came up with the enemy just as they had crossed Carrick's Ford, and again opened fire upon them.

General Garnett attempted to rally his men, but they were too much terrified to be stopped in their headlong flight. Just then, Major Gordon, with Capt. Ferry's company, which led the advance of Dumont's regiment, came to the brink of the river, where they could see Gen. Garnett waving to his men to return. In an instant, Sergeant Burlingame "drew a bead" on him and fired. He fell instantly, and when Major Gordon reached him but a moment later, his muscles were just giving their last convulsive twist. The Major stooped down by his side, tenderly closed his eyes, bound up his face, and left a guard to protect his body.

. . . .

Returning from the bank where Garnett lay, I went up to the bluff on which the enemy had been posted. The first object that caught the eye was a large iron rifled cannon (a six pounder) which they had left in their precipitate flight. The star spangled banner of one of our regiments floated above it. Around was a sickening sight. Along the brink of that bluff lay ten bodies, stiffening in their own gore, in every contortion which their death anguish had produced. Others were gasping in the last agonies, and still others were writhing with horrible but not mortal wounds, surrounded by the soldiers whom they really believed to be about to plunge the bayonet to their hearts. Never before, had I so ghastly a realization of the horrid nature of this fraternal struggle. These men were all Americans—men whom we had once been proud to claim as countrymen—some of them natives of our own Northern states.

I have alluded to the comparative certainty with which correspondents in the Civil War could count upon the telegraph. But they had to reach it, and on this occasion Reid had to consider ways and means. The fight occurred on Saturday afternoon. To get his despatch into Monday's paper he had to reach the telegraph-office at Rowlesburgh, a long and ticklish journey, before midnight on Sunday. While he was debating this problem circumstances seemed to play into his hands. It was decided to send the body of General Garnett to Washington, and accordingly it had to be transported across country to Rowlesburgh, the nearest railway-station.

Reid was made a member of the little party organized to perform the task, the others being Major Gordon, in charge of the body, another correspondent, and a couple of mounted soldiers. They started with a mule-team on Sunday morning, in grave doubt as to whether they might not stumble into an enemy encampment. As the day wore on they struck a pike which grew ever more difficult. It narrowed down until at some places it left a scant six inches between the outer wheels and a drop of two hundred feet into the coffee-colored Cheat. At one breathless moment their wheels hung over the descent while the devoted mules put their shoulders into a last miraculous tug. In pitchy darkness they arrived on the outskirts of their destination, only to be fired on by their own pickets. The chances for Monday's paper went a-glimmering as the exhausted travellers, unable to make any impression on the excited minds of Rowlesburgh's wary guardians, unhitched the mules and threw themselves down under the trees, regardless of rattlesnakes and copperheads. The blockade was not raised until two in the morning.

By the time Reid got back to Grafton the substantial effect of Rich Mountain and Carrick's Ford had been realized. The campaign, though not altogether done with, had pretty conclusively established Union control. A few days later he left to report politics at Columbus, but in a despatch written on the way he noted an important fruit of the freeing of West Virginia. At Grafton he had observed the effect of the first sinister rumors from Manassas upon the troops. The latter had enlisted for but three months. "The only effect," he says, "was to make more of them three years' men." That is an apt bit of testimony to the special significance of the campaign. Its success fostered everywhere the resilience of spirit which was desperately needed throughout the North in the face of Bull Run. The biographers of Lincoln have feelingly painted his steadiness of demeanor under the weight of that disaster, the serenity with which he met the daily torments of administration, sighing over Greeley's famous letter, with its counsels of compromise, but giving to such exhortations only the tribute of a sigh. The programme which he then thought out looked undismayed to victory. One source of his confidence was the campaign in West Virginia.

Sharing in the buoyance which prevailed at the moment, Reid resumed work at the office with gusto, and presently rejoined the troops in the best of spirits. McClellan, still under the protection of that blindly amiable fate which was to cost the nation so much, had been summoned to Washington to receive the choicest of rewards, the command of the Army of the Potomac. Rosecrans was in charge in West Virginia, and Reid, a happy aide-de-camp on his staff, saw only a swift termination to his task. There was nothing for the Union forces to do but to hold what had been gained and repress the secession tendencies of a portion of the population. Lee's repute, already high, made his appearance at Cheat Mountain Gap the source of some uneasiness, but this was not taken too seriously at headquarters. Reid was there one day when Rosecrans was asked if he did not think the rebel commander likely to prove a troublesome antagonist. "Not at all," he replied. "I know all about Lee. He will make a splendid plan of campaign; but I'll fight the campaign before he gets through with planning it." The correspondent at his elbow once more was cheered by the prospect of an early fight—and once more was disappointed. It took a month to bring off the battle of Carnifex's Ferry, and then, though he described the winning of that engagement with appropriate ardor, the letters which served as postscripts to his main despatch leave the reader in no doubt as to his belief that Rosecrans had achieved but a barren victory. In the protracted lull which followed everybody wondered why the flying rebels were not pursued. Reid bitterly noted that while we were sorting the enemy's frying-pans and flintlock muskets he was hunting up another place to fortify, and he concluded thus: "We had Western Virginia clear of rebel armies, we opened a gap to let them in, then fought them, behind their entrenchments, on ground of their own selection, drove them out again, and then stopped. That is the sum of our Western Virginia campaigning up to date."

The reader will not, I trust, interpret my use of the last quotation as designed to revive—of all superfluities—acrimonious discussion of minor and virtually forgotten episodes. It is intended, simply, to point to a characteristic of Reid's correspondence, its outspokenness. If the criticism just cited, though tempered as to details of individual responsibility, was repeated as tested and ratified when he came to write "Ohio in the War," several years later, it was because he had been extremely careful to know at the time just what he was writing about. I say this since I cannot, of course, reproduce the voluminous columns of his correspondence, and nevertheless wish to indicate their leading traits. His practice was systematic. At the outset of a campaign he would summarize the military situation, survey the topographical conditions to be reckoned with—not neglecting the scenic features of interest—and in so far as discretion permitted him to do so he sent home the essential details of every step in an advance. The continuity which the despatches of a campaign derive as a matter of course from the mere progression of events is so supported by the manner in which he looks after the connecting-links that those which he wrote under pressure for a newspaper might be lifted bodily into a book. I do not speak here of the purely literary form, which he would naturally have rehandled if he had ever made such use of his despatches as I have hinted, but of the curiously balanced nature of his matter. The fulness as well as the graphic richness of his work enabled the readers of the "Gazette" to follow the army in its environment, to see it, and to know in remarkable measure what it was about. Their appreciation of "Agate," contributing very promptly to his advance in journalism, rested not only upon this service which he rendered them, but upon the constant display of his critical faculty where they were personally most interested, that is, amongst the troops so largely drawn from Ohio. He wrote of their health and their food, reported when camps were unsanitary, ventilated the wrath of surgeons supplied with bad instruments, and looked into the extravagances of the commissariat. The costliness of the amateur in the breaking in of mules was one subject of complaint. Another, returned to again and again, was the fatuity which continued to send Northern troops into the field clad in gray, the Confederate color, a source of frequent and sometimes fatal confusion. On the superiority of the rebel secret service to our own he could not too often or too indignantly dilate. The function of the war correspondent at that time was not, exclusively, the painting of battle pictures. He was there to awaken the public to hit-or-miss policies, the plague of incompetent officers, and all the other abuses which marked the opening of the war.

CHAPTER VII

PITTSBURG LANDING AND GETTYSBURG

Returning to Cincinnati in the early fall, Reid left in October for the war in Kentucky, another campaign of rather indeterminate developments. He was glad to diversify it by visits home, where he joined Sam Reed and E. D. Mansfield on the editorial page, and congratulated himself on being the youngest man who had ever held such a position on the "Gazette." It renewed his old zest for leader-writing and he went on producing editorials when he left again for the front. At Frankfort the proceedings of the legislature which was so active in rescuing the State from its "stupor of neutrality" interested him even more than did the affairs of the troops. All the time, too, he was gaining light on the purely human emotions let loose by the onset of the war. It still brings out in great vividness some of the episodes in his newspaper correspondence.

There are no figures in the history of the earlier stages of the conflict more sympathetic than those Southerners on the border who were willing to fight for the preservation of the Union but who could not see why that required them to submit to the confiscation of their living property. In one of his letters to the "Gazette" Reid reports his encounter with a loyal Kentuckian, a legislative leader, who by accident stumbled into his room after dinner one night and fell into talk about the conduct of the war. This conversation reflects a typical Southern view. I rescue a fragment of it to recall what the policy down there was like in one of its more intelligible aspects. It is the Kentuckian, of course, who is speaking:

> Never before was a people so stricken by God with absolute idiocy as these Slavery-defending Secessionists who started the rebellion. Of course, if the constitution is violated by the North, as I freely admit she has great provocation to do, of course Slavery is at an end. The rebels were stricken with blindness, Sir. Never, in the history of the world, was there as mad, as suicidal an attempt as they have made. End the rebellion tomorrow, and they have given Slavery a most threatening wound, if not its death blow. The annals of the world's insanity might be searched without finding a parallel. There is no use disguising the matter; theoretically you northern people may be right in opposing Slavery—we'll not discuss that—but a decree of emancipation would be the opening of a frightful war, and the end of Republican institutions. Liberty would be gone, anarchy would be upon us, and *sauve qui peut!* Would it not be better than that, to adopt the policy Kentucky wants? Kick out Cameron, drop the pitiful nigger question, tell the armies just to let slaves alone, have nothing to do with them, neither harbor them like Abolitionists, nor seize and return them like nigger catchers, keep them out of your lines unless you need them to work for you, quit your everlasting nigger agitation and nigger discussion, and go ahead with your fighting.

Reid's interlocutor talked, he says, with an energy, a fierceness even, that no Northern man could have felt. His eloquence made a stimulating if not a convincing appeal. It was through such meetings that Reid developed that understanding of the whole situation which was to enable him not only to see current facts clearly but to form judgments upon them. For weeks in Kentucky he was occupied with the politics of the war rather than with the armies in the field. The latter kept him for a time in a curious state of suspense. The ever-recurring prospects of an advance would only bring the annoyance of one false alarm after another. One expedition he mournfully describes to his brother as "a terrible sell." But at that very moment he was drawing nearer to one of the major operations of the war.

The rebel line then extended from Columbus, on the Mississippi, straight across to Fort Henry on the Tennessee and Fort Donelson on the Cumberland, thence to Bowling Green, and from that point to Cumberland Gap, the junction with their forces in Virginia. In the campaign leisurely developed against this line Grant's descent from Cairo and his timely seizure of Paducah, neutralizing the rebel occupation of Columbus, seemed to foreshadow early and more fruitful attacks. An advance upon Bowling Green was perennially in the air, but as 1862 opened, Reid had the foresight to keep his feelers out toward the other end of the line and in the direction of the new officer who "meant fighting—not everlasting preparations and proclamations." Then came Fort Donelson, to confirm his intuitions, and editorial writing lost its charm. In one of the letters to Gavin through which he kept the family circle at Xenia apprised of his movements, there is a hurried explanation of his being at that writing storm-bound with half a dozen army surgeons in "this Egyptian country," namely, a way station in one of the dreariest parts of Illinois. "I'd hardly got into the office yesterday, till I had passes crammed in my pockets, and was told to take the first train for Cairo and Fort Donelson. How long I'm to be gone I don't know. I am instructed to see to it that the 'Gazette' is first in the news." He was gone for weeks and gave the "Gazette" the news of Shiloh, which filled ten columns of that journal, was reprinted in "extras" by the papers of St. Louis and Chicago, and made the fame of "Agate."

How he fulfilled his mission he related in some detail years afterward, when a memorable controversy over the battle broke out. He went up the Tennessee River with Generals Rawlins and Hillyer, of General Grant's staff. He was all over the encampments at Pittsburg Landing and at Crump's Landing long before the battle, and more than once was a guest in Lieutenant-Colonel Kyle's regiment, of General Sherman's command. The day before the battle he was ill in bed at General Lew Wallace's headquarters at Crump's Landing, sharing that officer's tent. On his way down to his headquarters at Savannah that night Grant stopped briefly at Crump's Landing. He said that if an attack were made at all by the enemy, of which he was not sure, it would probably be made there, and not at Pittsburg Landing. The next morning Reid was waked by the firing at the latter place, several miles above. Rising from his sick-bed, he made the best of his way thither, arriving later than he wished, but still as early as the general commanding, a fact which it amused him to recall at the time of the aforesaid controversy. General Wallace in his "Memoirs" explains how Reid managed to reach the battle-field with Grant. Between five and six o'clock Sunday morning Wallace and his staff went aboard a steamboat tied up at Crump's Landing and breakfasted there, listening to the firing and waiting impatiently for the appearance of Grant's steamer, the *Tigress*. It came alongside at about eight-thirty, Grant gave Wallace his orders and pushed off. Reid was soon afterward missed and later it was discovered that, "feeling the need of getting to the field early, he had gone quietly aboard the *Tigress*."

He was thus on the field throughout the first and disastrous day of the battle. He slept on the bluff under Beauregard's shells through Sunday night. He witnessed the successful advance the next day, and that night slept with a number of the members of General Lew Wallace's staff in one of the tents to the right of Shiloh Church, from which General Sherman's men had been driven the morning before. He had seen all that it was possible for one man to see of a chaotic battle, involving a hundred and fifty thousand men, fighting backward and forward for two long days, in a five miles' line and over four miles' retreat and advance, in a country largely covered with dense forest. For what he could not himself see he sought the best authority, riding carefully over and over the ground, asking questions innumerable of those who knew, and sifting consistent truth from the multiplicity of replies with such skill as experience had taught him. Primed with all this information he made swiftly for the "Gazette" office. He had begun on the field to write his account of the battle, and he finished it partly on a hospital boat going down the river, partly on the cars between Cairo and Cincinnati. A fellow correspondent who met him at Cairo noted his appearance. "His expression suggested an escape from some imminent and frightful danger. He was no coward, but there was a good deal of apparent awe on that face."

There are dramatic passages in his long narrative, rapid thumb-nail sketches flung into the broad panorama as individual regiments or officers assumed salient parts in the fight. Typical is an incident of the assault on Sherman's left, in the first day's battle, when Stuart's brigade was engaged at Lick Creek. As the rebels rushed down and crossed the ford, under cover of fire from the bluffs, their color-bearers stepped defiantly to the front. Our sharpshooters wanted to pick them off, but Colonel Stuart interposed: "No, no, they're too brave fellows to be killed." It was not, however, for its anecdotes, its picturesque impressionism, that the despatch was read. The essential thing in it is the writer's large survey of the battle, a perfect illustration of the technical method to which I have already referred. That method was the harder to apply, too, for a reason of which he speaks himself in the middle of the despatch, and to which history, I may add in passing, has given sufficient ratification: "Thus far I have said little or nothing of any plan of attack or defence among our commanders. It has been simply because I have failed to see any evidences of such a plan." His task was to explicate in an orderly, understandable manner a battle which had a good deal more of improvisation about it than ordinarily goes with an action as important as Shiloh. He prepared his readers for this with a terse summary of the situation before the battle and brought it out in blazing relief in his description of the manner in which, on Sunday morning, our men were surprised:

> Some, particularly among our officers, were not yet out of bed. Others were dressing, others washing, others cooking, a few eating their breakfasts. Many guns were unloaded, ammunition was ill-supplied—in short, the camps were virtually surprised—disgracefully, it might be added, unless some one can hereafter give some yet undiscovered reason to the contrary—and were taken at almost every possible disadvantage.
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> The first wild cries from the pickets rushing in, and the few scattering shots that preceded their arrival, aroused the regiments to a sense of their peril; an instant afterward, shells were hurtling through the tents, while, before there was time for thought of preparation, there came rushing through the woods, with lines of battle sweeping the whole fronts of the division-camps and bending down on either flank, the fine, dashing compact columns of the enemy.
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> Into the just-aroused camps thronged the rebel regiments, firing sharp volleys as they came, and springing toward our laggards with the bayonet. Some were shot down as they were running, without weapons, hatless, coatless, toward the river. The searching bullets found other poor unfortunates in their tents, and there all unheeding now, they still slumbered, while the unseen foe rushed on. Others fell, as they were disentangling themselves from the flaps that formed the doors to their tents; others as they were buckling on their accoutrements; a few, it was even said, as they were vainly trying to impress on the cruelly-exultant enemy their readiness to surrender.

Hard reading this must have made for the people in Cincinnati who had kinsmen in the Army of the Tennessee, and there was, of course, worse to follow—the shattering of Prentiss's division, the terrible losses suffered by McClernand's and Sherman's divisions as they, too, were forced to give ground, and the whole army was crowded back on Pittsburg Landing. Reid's despatch spares nothing of the bitterness of that first humiliating day. There is scarce a ray of light in it, save as it flashes forth from some instance of personal heroism, until as the battle dies down news comes that Buell's troops are at hand across the river and that Lew Wallace's division is advancing from Crump's Landing. Both reinforcements could be counted upon to be ready in the morning. Then, under the shadow of defeat, Grant set his teeth for victory. Reid watched him as he sat on his horse on the bluff amid his staff, quiet, thoughtful, almost stolid, and heard his reply to some one who asked if the prospect did not begin to look gloomy. "Not at all," he said. "They can't force our lines around these batteries to-night—it is too late. Delay counts everything with us. To-morrow we shall attack them with fresh troops and drive them, of course." It was from that moment that Reid dated his belief in Grant's greatness as a military commander, and the immediacy of his impression is shown by the effect which the soldier's words had in his despatch, where it is plain that the morning's battle was awaited with grave confidence.

At the dawn of the day which merged the name of Pittsburg Landing into that of Shiloh, he noted the demeanor of Buell's men, hastening over the river, aware of the reverses they had come to repair, but in nowise depressed. They took up their work "determinedly, hopefully, calmly," and though as the conflict was resumed there were still evidences of the want of system which had been so expensive on Sunday, he lays stress on the superb morale of the Federals. It was that that broke the rebel resistance, and the despatch is thenceforth but a picture of swaying lines until the hard-lost fields of Sunday are regained in a "wave of successes." He has less to say of strategy than of bloody collisions, and at the end, summing up the killed and wounded, and the forces engaged, he closes with the reiteration of his belief that "it was not numbers that gained us the day, it was fighting."

It was harder fighting than any he had yet seen, on a bigger scale, and more closely allied to the national aspects of the war. Shiloh was a critical battle, administering a check which in the process of time was to take on an even greater significance than was perceptible at the moment, and in rising to his opportunity Reid made a profound impression upon his readers. The brilliance of his despatch brought "Agate" into wider repute as a war correspondent, and in Cincinnati, where the cost of the fight was felt with a directness comparatively unknown in the East, there was especially abundant appreciation for the man who had had the courage to give the facts concerning it. But the very outspokenness which made him popular at home was making him anything but popular in camp. While the people of the "Gazette" were congratulating him on a masterly *coup* and increasing his salary, there was trouble brewing for him at the front, for him and for other newspaper men. He had felt, before, the pressure of official resentment of his too candid criticisms, and in the course of the movement on Corinth he had to face it in virulent form.

Returning to Pittsburg Landing a fortnight after the battle, he had not long to wait before Halleck, now in supreme command, let loose his famous war upon the press. It was short, sharp, and conclusive enough from the general's point of view, but with enough ambiguity and evasiveness about it in the actual orders issued to make the correspondents show fight. Reid was elected their chairman and spokesman, and from his memoranda of the incident it is to be inferred that they were all very hot. For a man duly accredited with a pass, fresh from the secretary of war at Washington, it was disconcerting, to say the least, to be told that Stanton's authority in the matter would not be recognized. The situation became galling when it developed that the process of exclusion directed at the press was genially aimed at "unauthorized hangers-on." The ugly phrase, like Macbeth's Amen, stuck in the throat. The correspondents got some solace from General Pope's action. Familiar with the machinations of the newspaper-haters, and knowing at once what the order was meant for, he resolved to do nothing without explicit instructions. He accordingly sent to General Halleck the question: "Whom do you mean by unauthorized hangers-on?" The general attempted to dodge. "The Regulations fully explain that point," was his answer. Determined not to move in the dark, General Pope again inquired: "Do you include newspaper correspondents among the unauthorized hangers-on?" This time there was no possibility of evasion, and General Halleck was compelled to answer that he did. Then came a meeting of the correspondents and the preparation by Reid of this address to the only arbiter of the trouble:

To MAJOR-GENERAL HALLECK,
General;

The undersigned, loyal citizens and accredited representatives of loyal journals, respectfully represent that they came here in compliance with the order of Secretary Stanton, authorizing journalists to accompany the army—some of them bearing passes issued by his authority, and have remained here several weeks, for the sole purpose and exclusive purpose of recording the approaching battle.

They are now informed that Field Order No. 54 requires them to leave the army lines.

While they will not attempt to remain unless they can do so openly, and with the permission of Major-General Halleck, there are many newspaper letter-writers attached to the camps in fictitious capacities, who, notwithstanding whatever precautions may be taken, will succeed in evading Field Order No. 54, and remaining with the army, while the duly accredited and responsible representatives of the press are excluded, in manifest injustice to themselves and the journals which they represent.

While desirous of avoiding everything injurious to the army, or any portion of it, they represent that their exclusion, just on the eve of the event which they came here especially to record, will be unjust to the loyal public journals and to the country which looks to them for information; and respectfully ask whether, as has been suggested by Colonel Scott, Assistant-Secretary of War, there are any conditions on which they will be permitted to remain.

Halleck dodged his obligation to give a written reply, and in the personal interview which took its place he exacerbated matters by remarks about "spies," in which the signers of the protest saw only a paltry pretence. They were not in the dark as to the continued complaint that had worked upon the general. Provost-Marshal Key had stated it, in terms, and without qualification. The complaint was that correspondents praised some generals and did not praise others, and the complaint came from the parties not praised! The situation was impossible for self-respecting men, and it resulted, without further parley, in the voluntary withdrawal from the lines of every legitimate, accredited correspondent, save three, one of whom was too sick to leave his bed, while the other two, alone out of all the representatives of the press assembled there, resolved to attempt skulking through the camps in fictitious positions.

The "Gazette's" answer, so far as "Agate" was concerned, to the slight put upon the press before Corinth, was to advance him on its staff, sending him forthwith to Washington. His activities there belong to another chapter, but it is proper to anticipate chronology and fill out this sketch of his work as a war correspondent with some notice of his last appearance in that rôle, on the field of Gettysburg. In a sense he had not abandoned it when he began in June to send his daily despatches from the capital. These are rarely without their echoes of the war, comments on battles and campaigns—and commanding officers—which show that he continued to follow these subjects as zealously as when at the front. But he had put aside his horse, and did not mount it again until the autumn. Then, on a visit home, news of the battle of Perryville drew him into a fortnight's expedition to get at the truth about the third invasion of hapless Kentucky. He wrote some scorching letters on Buell's failure to catch up with Bragg and Kirby Smith, but the campaign hardly figures as such in the body of his despatches. His war news thenceforth is all of the sort that would befall the regular routine of a Washington correspondent, until the fateful summer of 1863.

The first intimations of great events to come developed when he was at Columbus in the spring of the new year, reporting the Democratic convention which nominated Vallandigham for the governorship. He had finished with that scandalous affair and was peacefully meditating on its grotesque features when the tidings of Ewell's raid into Pennsylvania broke upon the town. With them came his marching orders, and he took the first train out for Philadelphia. His impressions there inclined him to scoff a little at the panic-stricken stories which came out of the disturbed portion of the State, stories of fabulous numbers of rebel troops, and he returned to Washington discounting them with energy. Nevertheless, there is a tremor of excitement agitating his despatches at this time. Something is in the wind. There is a stir in the Army of the Potomac. Hooker is ordering his troops forward with great rapidity, and it seems certain that there will soon be a decisive battle somewhere, in Maryland, or possibly along the southern border of Pennsylvania. He made a flying trip to Frederick, to watch for tell-tale straws, and wondered if he had found one when he met General Seth Williams there, just at the end of a fifty-mile ride in the saddle. He was consumed with anxiety as to what Hooker was going to do. It was Hooker's name, of course, that was on everybody's lips, it was Hooker whose possible plans sent ripples of restlessness through the streets of Washington, now resounding again with the march of troops, and off in Cincinnati it worked the same spell. On Sunday evening, June 28th, Reid received from the "Gazette" this telegram: "Would like you (if you are able) to equip yourself with horse and outfit, put substitutes in your place in the office, and join Hooker's army in time for the fighting." Only the day before Hooker had been relieved of his command and Meade had been put in his place, one more sensation to spur a newspaper man on in a crisis. But he had time for but little speculation on this startling aftermath of Hooker's failure at Chancellorsville. The tension prophesying Gettysburg grew by the hour. It was increased for the correspondents by the sudden interposition of alarming obstacles. There was no getting beyond Baltimore on Monday; the railroad had been cut. The next day, however, it was opened again, as far as Frederick, and from there he rode out on horseback to join headquarters twenty-seven miles away, at Taneytown.

It was at that point that Meade received news of the desperate fighting which had unexpectedly begun the battle on the left, and Reid was thus given, by an odd turn of fate, the chance to repeat his experience at Shiloh. It will be remembered how he had there contrived to arrive on the field "as early as the general commanding." In this instance, too, he was resolved to do that, and hastened on to even "precede headquarters" if he could. He reached Two Taverns by moonlight, slept there, and at four in the morning, on July 2nd, was off for the field to keep pace with Meade's first orders. Too late for the preceding day's battle, his ride luckily took him at once to the top of Cemetery Hill, the centre of our line, and the most exposed point for a concentration of the rebel fire, where General Howard was good enough to explain the action as he had seen it. He made other explorations and presently wove into a connected narrative all that he could learn about the battle from four of the most prominent generals engaged in it and from numerous subordinates. The rest he saw and described in his usual systematic fashion, outlining the positions taken, connecting them with the topography of the scene, and especially bringing out the shrewd defensive character of Meade's battle plan—"the enemy was to fight him where he stood." It is a close-knit narrative, but broader in sweep and fuller of atmosphere than the account of Shiloh. There is more to indicate the progress of the battle in time, to communicate a sense of the strange medley of action and calm on such a field, of the inevitable pauses as well as the crucial movements. Scattered through the steadily advancing story of the fight there are vignettes of Meade at headquarters, looking more the general and less the student, under the inspiration of the moment; of Sickles borne away with his leg shot off and a cigar in his mouth; of Reid and his friend Wilkinson, of the "Times," lying on the grass and discussing the question as to whether the sound of some unfamiliar bullet flying over their heads might fairly be called "a muffled howl." From the fourteen columns of newspaper print I take, at random, this passage:

> Some Massachusetts batteries—Capt. Bigelow's, Capt. Phillips's, two or three more under Capt. McGilvry of Maine—were planted

> on the extreme left, advanced now well down the Emmetsburg road, with infantry in their front—the first division, I think, of Sickles' Corps. A little after five (on July 2nd), a fierce rebel charge drove back the infantry and menaced the batteries. Orders are sent to Bigelow on the extreme left, to hold his position at every hazard short of sheer annihilation, till a couple more batteries can be brought to his support. Reserving his fire a little, then with depressed guns opening with double charges of grape and canister, he smites and shatters, but cannot break the advancing line. His grape and canister are exhausted, and still, closing grandly up over their slain, on they come. He falls back on spherical case, and pours this in at the shortest range. On, still onward comes the artillery-defying line, and still he holds his position. They are within six paces of the guns—he fires again. Once more, and he blows devoted soldiers from his very muzzles. And still mindful of that solemn order, he holds his place. They spring upon his carriages and shoot down his horses! And then, his Yankee artillerists still about him, he seizes the guns by hand, and from the very front of that line drags two of them off. The caissons are further back—five out of the six are saved.
>
> That single company in that half hour's fight, lost thirty-three of its men, including every sergeant it had. The captain himself was wounded. Yet it was the first time it was ever under fire! I give it simply as a type. So they fought along that fiery line!

It is chiefly of the monstrous carnage that he writes, rising to the crescendo of Pickett's historic charge and to those last convulsive struggles from which both armies emerged so torn that if Lee knew he was defeated, Meade was hardly aware of the extent of his own victory. Paying tribute to his colleagues who had faced death on the field, Reid remarked that "their accounts may well be said to have the smell of fire upon them," and they in turn would have said it of his own. The morning after the battle he made the indispensable last hurried survey of the field, rode up Cemetery Hill for one more wide view, and with a trophy of roses and columbine plucked from an old grave set off on a mad gallop for Westminster through nearly thirty miles of mud and rain. He was just in time to catch the hospital train for Baltimore

—"out of the field, once more; may it be forever!" as he exclaims in the last line of his despatch.

The commendation he received at the time for his work at Gettysburg was confirmed in later years, in the wide acceptance of his narrative as a permanent contribution to the literature of the war. It is a part of the record, recognized at once for its truth and for its tense dramatic quality. The military student seeking to establish the facts of the battle, and the lay reader concerned chiefly with the recovery of its tragic glamour, have both found Reid a trustworthy historian. One instance of his usefulness on this subject, long afterward, has the special interest of exposing something of his own view of what he did, as well as the basis of his method as a war correspondent. In 1872 Edmund Clarence Stedman accepted a commission to write the poem for the reunion of the Grand Army of the Potomac in the following year. He chose the battle of Gettysburg for his theme, and, rereading Reid's despatches as preserved in Moore's "Rebellion Record," he sought his friend's aid on certain points which he thought might enter into his composition. Was the third stage of the fight developed on a bright, sunny day? Were all the nights moonlit? Did the second day's battle actually rage in the cemetery, so that our killed and wounded lay around among the graves? He turned to Reid because the latter had written on Gettysburg "the best group of battle letters made up during the war, without exception." He had found some errors in them, on studying the official reports, but he marvelled at their having been made so nearly correct, and they were "beautifully done." Reid sent him the following letter:

New York, March 19th, 1872.

My dear Stedman;

I am more touched than you can well imagine by what you say about my almost forgotten battle letters. I worked hard on them and conscientiously at the time, as indeed I have done on nearly everything I have ever tried. I never envied anything so much as that facility of work which allows your "great genius" to throw off his best things on the inspiration of the moment, and indeed I never was quite so skeptical about anything in the world. I know that my account of Gettysburg must be inaccurate in many points, though I have never had occasion since to make a critical study of the subject. On the Pittsburg Landing fight I think I was more accurate, having a better knowledge of the troops and of the ground. I had been over it, you know, for weeks before.

The third day's fight at Gettysburg was sunny. I recollect very well lying in the shade, at the end of the little house in which Meade had his headquarters, on the grass, with a group of correspondents and staff officers, as well as feeling the grateful nature of the shade once or twice as I came from Seminary Hill towards Meade's headquarters. I have an indistinct recollection that late in the evening the air became heavier, but at the time of the grand cannonade in the afternoon there were light clouds in the sky and the atmosphere was wonderfully clear whenever you got outside the smoke.

My recollection is that the intervening nights were not moonlit, though certainly the night between the first and second days' battles was clear, and I think also the early part of the night between the second and third. I slept in a house round which there was some cavalry fighting on our extreme right on the last day there and through all the nights, and so am not so certain of the character of the nights.

The second day's battle did not rage in the Cemetery in the sense that any rebel soldiers got up there, but did in the sense that occasional round shot and minie balls went through the Cemetery and that a good many men were killed there. I thought myself that I was in more danger sitting on Cemetery Hill on the third day than at any time during the war, and the next day, revisiting the Cemetery, I found many of the grave stones broken down with round shot, and in some cases corpses still lying about on the graves.

I am sure you will make an admirable battle poem. You wrote the best cavalry poem of the war, ["Alice of Monmouth"] and there is no reason why you should not make the best battle Poem.

With cordial regards,
Always faithfully yours,
WHITELAW REID.

The Gettysburg despatches fittingly marked the close of Reid's career as a correspondent on the battle-field. In his campaigns in West Virginia, even such materials as those with which he had to deal in battles like Carrick's Ford and Carnifex's Ferry were predominantly local in character. They had their more distant psychological effects, but they belonged to the period in which the Northern armies—and the Northern policies—were seeking their ultimate direction. In Kentucky these conditions persisted. Shiloh introduced him to the more effective prosecution of the war, and after that his work in Washington, the focal point, prepared him to report Gettysburg with a firmer grasp not only upon military movements but upon their grand strategical meaning. Shiloh and Gettysburg were the high peaks in his range. I have endeavored to show how he handled them, as fully as has been consistent with limitations of space. Needless to say, I have not traversed any of his despatches without reference to other sources. Throughout they have proved to be in accord, in all essentials, with accepted history, justifying such comment as that made by General H. V. Boynton when, in 1881, the Shiloh despatch was the subject of controversy:

> Three careful comparisons of this account, made in three different years, each time after extended reading of the official records of Shiloh, warrant the declaration that it is one of the most accurate and graphic newspaper accounts of a two days' battle written by any one during the war. It is far more accurate than any important chapter of Gen. Sherman's "Memoirs," written as those volumes were, ten years after the war, and with all the official records of the war at his full control. It was accepted as correct at the time, and in everything but a few minor details, which the Generals on the field could not have given more accurately at the time, it will stand the test of the records today.

It is perhaps with such testimony as this that I may most appropriately close the foregoing analysis of the war exploits of "Agate."

CHAPTER VIII

WASHINGTON SCENES

The state of the Union in 1862, when Reid was established at Washington as the correspondent of the "Gazette," might be likened to that of an army which has been repulsed in the first shock of a long and deadly battle, and has been forced by the inexperience of officers and men to suffer terrible damage in manœuvring for position. The Civil War lasted four years, but they were not four years of systematic campaigning. From Sumter to Shiloh, and for some time thereafter, the military power of the North was slow in organizing itself. The country was steadied after the first exaggerated terrors of Bull Run by the permanent elements of strength in the national fibre. It needed time to create a fighting machine and supply it with efficient generals. It is the testimony of all the historians of that epoch that the earliest of our men in the field were more than willing to fight. But the valor of those troops could not push beyond the limits set for it by leadership, the gallantry of which was not always matched by judgment. The tragic motive in Lincoln's long vigil is to be discerned in his ceaseless prayer for victories clean-cut and fruitful, unmistakable steps in the crushing of the rebellion.

His generals often enough forced the enemy back in virtual defeat; they did not break him. McClellan, of course, was the worst offender in this regard. "Please do not let him get off without being hurt," Lincoln wrote to that commander before Antietam, but Lee inevitably crossed the Potomac, having suffered heavy losses but no rout. Well might the President in his bitterness speak of the army, that should have been used to so much greater purpose, as "only McClellan's bodyguard." The cup was always bitter. Shiloh and Island No. 10 came together. So handsome a brace of victories should have supplied a durable tonic. Instead, the North had to possess its soul in patience while Halleck followed up Grant's costly but powerful stroke at Shiloh with the crawling "pick and shovel" movement on Corinth—and Beauregard's fifty thousand men got away. They were incessantly getting away—Johnston from McClellan at Yorktown, Stonewall Jackson from Fremont and his colleagues in the Shenandoah Valley, Longstreet and Jackson from Pope at Second Bull Run. And in the military hierarchy of the North, McClellan gives way to Burnside; Burnside, after the failure of Fredericksburg, to Hooker; Hooker, after Chancellorsville, to Meade—the list of supersessions sounds like a dirge. It is only with Meade's success at Gettysburg and Grant's at Vicksburg, in 1863, that we hear in the tread of our armies the first intimations of an irresistible rhythm. Intolerable were the delays before such men as Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan were fixed in the saddle. There were periods when the turn of the tide seemed lost in a moonless night, when the promise to be fulfilled at Appomattox seemed not a promise but only a chance, postponed, and postponed, and again postponed.

The interest in Reid's despatches at this time springs from his criticism of military affairs, and, even more, from his running analysis of the particular political distemper which affected Washington life, keeping pace with the sluggish movement of the war. They clarify the aspect of the struggle which is, I suppose, the hardest for readers of the present generation to realize—the slow deliberation with which the slavery question was settled, the backings and fillings, the hesitancies, the interminable framing of laws, the pleadings with border States, the endless debates, the perpetual interposition of the hateful topic in half the business of the government. Work done in the forwarding of the great object was ever having to be done all over again, and the statesman congratulating himself on a step gained had still to reckon with a stiffer climb. There is a striking instance offered in the circumstances surrounding Sumner's tribute to the Thirty-seventh Congress. It had done much beyond any other Congress in our history, he said, to entitle it to the gratitude of the nation, and then he continued as follows: "Measures which for long years seemed attainable only to the most sanguine hopes, have triumphed. Emancipation in the National Capital; Freedom in all the national territories; the offer of ransom to help emancipation in the States; the recognition of Hayti and Liberia; the treaty with Great Britain for the suppression of the slave trade; the prohibition of the return of fugitive slaves by military officers; homesteads for actual settlers on the public lands; the Pacific Railroad; endowments of agricultural colleges out of public lands; such are some of the achievements by which the present Congress will be historic. Besides, we have raised an army, and made important additions to our navy; and have provided means for all our gigantic expenditures by a tax, which is in itself an epoch." If Sumner, of all men, could thus felicitate his co-workers, things were verily going well in July, 1862. But the words I have quoted were spoken at the end of a plea for the Confiscation Act; the orator was still at hardly more than the beginning of the nation's task.

The act in favor of which Sumner made his speech in the Senate superseded the law of 1861. The new measure broadened the scope of the old one. But like so many of those military actions at which I have glanced, it checkmated the enemy without sufficiently hurting him. Lincoln was often blamed in those days because he did not immediately improvise a workable policy. He had one all the time, but it was one of gradual emancipation, to rest so far as possible on voluntary State action. His prompt revocation of Fremont's blithe essay in military emancipation in Missouri in 1861 is perhaps the most pointed evidence of his reluctance to press matters, the expression, in a quick administrative act, of the caution running through all the letters and conversations which display the growth of the emancipation proclamation in his mind. In his grave conferences with the Border State delegations his voice is steadily on the side of generous, prudent, unhurried negotiation. When he crossed the bridge it was only as conditions invited the crossing and dictated the moment. In the whole literature of the great event the homeliest, most characteristic allusion to it is the best, because it preserves most convincingly the President's state of mind. To the artist, Carpenter, who painted the picture of the signing of the Proclamation he said: "It had got to be midsummer, 1862. Things had gone on from bad to worse, until I felt that we had reached the end of our rope on the plan of operations we had been pursuing; that we had about played our last card, and must change our tactics, or lose the game. I now determined upon the adoption of the emancipation policy." The game went right on. It was not won out of hand by the proclamation, for the difficulties hedging round the subject in every one of the secession States multiplied down through the period of reconstruction and beyond.

I dwell upon the fortuitous nature of military and political developments in Washington as Reid knew them in order to suggest something of the atmosphere in which he ripened his character as a journalist. It set the seal upon his growth at Xenia and made him an editor in the metropolitan acceptance of the term. In his campaigning for Lincoln emotion had had every outlet that youth could ask. What he had heard and seen in the legislative session at Columbus and on the battle-field was well calculated to heighten his ardors and at the same time to mature his judgment as it widened his view. I recall a saying of Disraeli's on the political writers who communicate to their readers *their theories* and not their observations of facts. Reid was lavish of observations of facts, and with them he gave his readers not theories but opinions, strong, well-reasoned opinions, and plenty of them. The "Gazette" was doubly pleased. The news from Washington then was only half told if it consisted in nothing more than a bald, routine report. The tale had to be completed by a candid observer's views of men and measures, his interpretations of conflicting currents. Reid travelled far as he set it forth, asserting himself as one of the frankest correspondents ever known at the capital. More than once a question of privilege was raised in the House, following some statement of his in the "Gazette," but he never failed to justify his case against the complaining member.

His frankness was accompanied by a seriousness of purpose and a sense of responsibility which, if characteristic of him at all times, was specially fostered by personal incidents in the year of his coming to Washington. Gavin's wife died in that year, and Gavin himself soon followed her. Reid immediately took out the papers which gave him the guardianship of their two young children, and at the same period became more than ever the reliance of his father and mother. His private papers now reveal him as altogether the head of the family at Xenia, and, in that position, doing everything possible to augment his resources. He had scarcely arrived in Washington before he had a pleasant intimation of the repute he had already earned. The proprietors of the St. Louis "Democrat," then the great Republican paper of the West, offered him the leading editorship at a good salary, with the promise of a speedy increase. It was a brilliant opening, offering him what he felt to be the most promising and prominent position to which a newspaper man out there could aspire. The "Gazette" people promptly countered by admitting him to ownership in their paper, permitting him to pay for his stock out of the dividends declared, a process which accounted for two-thirds of his purchase in the first year. Also, they pointed out that by staying two or three years on the "Gazette" he might become as much of a leader in their columns as he could desire. To make his decision finally auspicious the New York "Times" asked him to take charge of their Washington business through the summer, paying him well for the same despatches that he was sending to the "Gazette." It is amusing to note, by the way, that the "Times" then had some idea of permanently acquiring his services. In view of subsequent events, when Reid at the head of The Tribune and George Jones at the head of the "Times" carried on a dire warfare, this proposal belongs amongst the minor oddities of American journalistic *ana*. (The Washington arrangement with the "Times," as a matter of fact, shortly expired.) During the third session of the Thirty-seventh Congress he acted as clerk to the military committee of the House, and throughout his three years at the capital he served as librarian of the House, an appointment that greatly aided him in his professional work, giving him admission to the floor and furthering relations with the members through which he secured valuable news and "inside views." This last-mentioned adjunct to his post as correspondent brings up the matter which he valued most, his friendship with certain of the leaders in public life.

Chase was his chief sponsor. The former aspirant to the presidency was now in the cabinet of his successful competitor, and Lincoln's secretary of the treasury no longer had any ill-will for Lincoln's editorial partisan. The relations which had been strained in Ohio were renewed in Washington on their original cordial footing, and so persisted down to Chase's death. Sumner, whose eloquence he had sought to enlist in his electioneering days, he now came to know face to face and on terms of ever-increasing friendliness. Ben Wade and Henry Winter Davis he knew and loved. Thaddeus Stevens he knew—and profoundly admired. Love was not precisely the emotion to be awakened by that antique Roman. Amongst the younger men Garfield was perhaps his closest friend. They had been thrown together some time before, and when the general resigned his commission, following his splendid conduct at Chickamauga, to take the seat in Congress to which he had been elected when in the field, the two permanently revived their old pact. At the White House, where he met Lincoln from time to time, Reid made the acquaintance of the President's secretaries, Nicolay and Hay, laying with the latter the foundations of a lifelong intimacy out of which all manner of interesting relations were to flow. He knew Hay then not only as the zealous young functionary but as the no less zealous literary amateur, discreetly charged by his friends with occasional sparkling editorials in the "Chronicle," and frankly recognized by them as the author of a couple of sonnets to General Banks, "very good in poetry and questionable in politics." Another companion of Reid's Washington life, likewise long cherished, was Edmund Clarence Stedman, sedately filling the post of clerk to Attorney-General Bates, but using all his spare time to finish his "Alice of Monmouth." There are other literary figures in the circle. Walt Whitman is one of them, tramping the hospitals, a stout, burly creature, with the head of Orestes Brownson set on a neck that Jove might have envied, and flaunting a great green handkerchief loosely knotted under his Byronic collar. Then there is the good old Polish diarist, Count Gurowski, with his tremendous gutturals, explosive, vitriolic, the Nemesis of every statesman and general on the horizon, and very lovable withal.

Towering above all the writers with whom he was associated at that time is, of course, Greeley. It was under the auspices of Chase and Sumner that he made the acquaintance of the man who had given him so much inspiration in his youth. They met very frequently thenceforth, whenever the older man was in Washington or his junior was in New York. In the latter city they foregathered on every subject under the sun. At a dinner-party there in his company Reid met and exchanged badinage with the aging but still sprightly N. P. Willis. The next morning Greeley called for his young friend and took him for a horseback ride through Central Park. In Washington, politics made their staple fare. Greeley was constantly in the House, observed at close quarters Reid's mastery of the themes it provided, and learned to rely upon his observations. Personal liking reinforced by sympathy and appreciation in professional matters quickly paved the way for the understanding which was in due course to take Reid to The Tribune. An incident connected with the organization of the Thirty-eighth Congress will show how soon and how closely they were allied.

It was the purpose of the opposition to get control of the House with the connivance of the clerk, Emerson

Etheridge, a peace Democrat from Tennessee, who was to celebrate his last hour in parliamentary office by throwing out the credentials of certain duly elected Union men. A collateral complication threatened was the putting forward of General Frank P. Blair, as a compromise candidate for the speakership, a Republican, to be sure, but not by any means the man for the administration. It is the squelching of this little scheme, by one of Lincoln's astutest strokes of diplomacy, that Reid thus reports to Greeley:

> Gazette Rooms.
> Nov. 2nd, 1863.
>
> My dear Mr. Greeley:
>
> I snatch a moment to say that the Frank Blair danger has just been handsomely averted. He sent Montgomery to the President to ask him whether he should remain in the army or come to Congress. Mr. Lincoln took the question as intimating that Blair gave him absolute authority to decide the matter. So he took time to consider;—then told Montgomery to tell Frank that if he would come on, go into the Administration Caucus and help organize the House, he would then give him back his Major Generalship and let him at once return to the army. That would, he told him, harmonize all these difficulties, and do a world of good. "I dont know," said Mr. Lincoln this morning, "whether Frank will do this or not, but it will show durned quick," (I quote literally,) "whether he's honest or not."
>
> Sincerely yours,
> Whitelaw Reid.
>
> The Blair business must not get "out," but I knew you ought to understand it. If Colfax is in town I hope you'll tell him of it.

The date of this communication is the date of Lincoln's letter to Montgomery Blair, admonishing the latter's brother in terms exactly confirming the accuracy of Reid's statement to his friend. Greeley got his news on the minute, and it was authentic.

Blair was amicably disposed of. Etheridge remained, and the sequel to his ill-omened intrigue has a piquancy in congressional annals which must be my excuse, if one is needed, for quoting a part of Reid's description of it. Greeley came over for the fray and was present in the House on the momentous 8th of December, dividing with Longfellow the honors of those strangers granted the privileges of the floor. The great editor and his disciple exulted together as they watched the unfolding of the scene, heard the sharp rap sounding from the clerk's table, and, in the sudden hush that followed, saw Etheridge craftily embark upon his perfidious adventure:

> It is not a bad face, that of the man who stands in the centre of the group of clerks, and thus calls the inchoate House to order; and yet he is about to attempt a scheme that only falls short of being monstrous because he is a moral coward. The roll is called, and it is seen that this Border State man, who has been lavishly rewarded with the favors of the Government for his supposed fidelity among the faithless, has undertaken to disfranchise five States of the Union rightfully represented here, and to foist upon Congress a set of rebels who have scarcely yet forgotten to speak of Richmond as their capital, as representatives of another.
>
> Members exchange angry glances; a few suppressed expressions of disgust at the paltry trickery are heard—not alone on the Administration side of the House; the galleries lean over in intent watchfulness. There is a moment's whispering in the group near the centre of the Administration side; and grim old Thad. Stevens, in the quietest of his quiet ways, rises to say that "if the Clerk has concluded the reading of the list which he proposes to read, he asks that, for the information of the House, he will now read the names which he has omitted to call." The Clerk blandly suggests that he would like to read the list of territorial delegates first, and Stevens courteously bows assent. Manifestly both sides are to be on their most gracious behavior—as long as possible. Then follows a little by-play about contested seats and territorial delegates; and the Clerk seizes the opportunity to edge in the hasty law of last session, on a technically literal construction of which he rests his case:
>
> "Be it Enacted, etc., That before the first meeting of the next Congress, and of every subsequent Congress, the Clerk of the next preceding House of Representatives shall make a roll of the Representatives elect, and place thereon the names of all persons, and of such persons only, whose credentials show that they were regularly elected in accordance with the laws of their States respectively, or the laws of the United States."

The last lines he emphasizes very forcibly, and looks half defiantly to the Administration side, as if to say: "There, get over your own legislation if you can." He will now, he says, read the credentials he has thrown out from Missouri. "Read those from the State of Maryland; they seem to be first upon the list," quietly interposes Dawes. The Clerk seems a little confused by the tactics, but he makes no objection. From the outset he lacks the nerve for his undertaking. . . .

As the reading progresses, there is a curious, expectant air on all faces. Where does the informality come in on which the monstrous effort is made to disfranchise a State? The law on which the Clerk relies only requires the certificate to show an election "in accordance with the law of the State or of the United States." This certificate recites the law of the State, says the election was held in accordance with it, and officially certifies, under the seal of the State and the signature of the Governor of the State, that certain men had the greatest number of votes, respectively, and were duly elected! And these names the Clerk has committed the infamy of leaving out!

The rank and file on the Democratic side look dismayed—the doubtful but honorable Border State men disgusted. They are willing to do much to gain advantage for their party, but they will not attain it by a sacrifice of their honor.

The culminating point of the contest between the conspirator Clerk and the outraged majority has come. While the certificate was being read, the group on the left has been consulting; the murmur of indignation at the close has hardly run around the hall, till Dawes is again on his feet and has compelled the Clerk's attention.

"Mr. Clerk, I offer the following resolution; and upon it I demand the previous question."

Half a dozen pages dart for the bit of paper in his hand; it is borne to the Clerk, who, (if his face be taken as evidence) would as lief receive a lighted bomb; galleries and floor give the profoundest attention, while he reads:

"Resolved, That the names of John A. J. Cresswell, Edwin H. Webster, Henry Winter Davis, Francis Thomas, and Benjamin G. Harris, be placed on the roll of this House of Representatives from Maryland."

It *is* a bomb. Mr. Etheridge has just two things to do. If he dares to carry out his conspiracy he must promptly refuse to entertain the motion, on the ground that the unorganized House has no power to instruct him to violate his construction of the law; or he must rule the resolution in order, and hopelessly abandon his plot.

The galleries do not fully understand the exact point the game has reached, and merely look on in curious expectancy. On the Floor it *is* understood.* There has been talk all day Sunday, and this morning, of a possibility of violence. The Administration men have calmly resolved that, having gained the majority before the people, they will not be cheated out of it by a renegade trickster in the House. If Mr. Etheridge refuses to entertain this motion, Thad. Stevens will instantly move that the oldest consecutive member of the House be declared Speaker pro tem., and put the question, and Mr. Washburne will be at once escorted to the Chair. There is a singular collection of muscular Unionism just about that gentleman that looks very much like business, and several burly Administration men are observed carelessly sauntering over toward the Opposition side of the Speaker's chair and Clerk's table. We are ready for any emergency—*semper paratus.*

Possibly the Clerk does not know all this; much more probably he does. It is a great stretch of charity to give him the benefit of the doubt.

A second class Democrat has incautiously recognized the resolution by moving to lay it on the table, and calling for the Yeas and Nays. A shrewder one demands whether it is not out of order, as it instructs the Clerk to do what a law of Congress forbids. It is Mr. Etheridge's last opportunity, but—he lacks the nerve to do as he would. "The Clerk is of opinion that it is in order, as being pertinent to the organization of the House." There is nothing left but to call the vote on laying it on the table. Bailey of Pennsylvania (Democrat) votes No, with the Administration side. Several more follow his example. This settles the question—counting up is but a formality. The Opposition have broken ranks, in disgust at the bold treachery of the Clerk. The result is announced, Yeas 74, Nays 94—a clean twenty majority for the Administration. A ripple of anxious inquiry runs around the galleries, in an instant applause bursts out, the ladies heartily joining, and the congratulations on the peaceful victory begin. The Clerk snappishly announces that he would keep order if he could. "Yes," growls Lovejoy, away on the extreme left, standing with his hands thrust in his pockets, and his head thrown surlily on one side, like a bull-dog watching a mouse, and feeling half-ashamed of himself for condescending to that kind of game. "Yes," in an audible undertone, "the Clerk would like to disorganize the House, if he could."

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* In view of the threatened outrage he [Lincoln] sent for some of the leading congressmen and told them the main thing was to be sure that all the Union members should be present. "Then," he said, "if Mr. Etheridge undertakes revolutionary proceedings, let him be carried out on a chip, and let our men organize the House." This practical solution of the trouble had occurred to others, and the Rev. Owen Lovejoy, disregarding for a moment the etiquette of his sacred calling, announced that he was quite ready himself to take charge of Etheridge, and was confident of his muscular superiority to the Tennessean.—"Abraham Lincoln: A History." By John G. Nicolay and John Hay. Vol. VII, p. 391.

Thus the famous purging of the House tested Reid's faculties as a parliamentary reporter. The whole despatch—a long one—sustains the tone of the part I have quoted, illustrating his seizure of telling points, and his familiarity with the forces underlying congressional debate, the factors—like Lovejoy's preparedness and Lincoln's political adroitness behind it—known only to the initiated. I could quote many more examples, for there were plenty of brilliant field days in Congress like the one on which we have just paused. He was in the House in January, 1863, when Vallandigham finally won the leadership of his party by discharging the worst of his copperhead venom in the teeth of the administration, and he looked on at the flaying bestowed upon the traitor by Bingham of Ohio and Wright of Pennsylvania. In the spring of the following year he witnessed Alexander Long's similar outbreak, and rejoiced in the withering invectives of Garfield and Winter Davis. "No man in either House can compare with Davis," he observed, "for the clear, lucid precision of his thought, the absolute, white radiance of star-light which he casts upon whatever subject he discusses." Reid was a critical student of the public speaking of his time before he came to Washington, and there he had an unwearied curiosity to discover the orators capable of really asserting themselves in "the most disorderly deliberative body in the world." Disorderly as he knew it to be, he knew also how remorseless the House was in judgment of intellectual force, how pitiless in criticism. On the eve of his departure from the press gallery, after three years of judicial observation, he arrived at this conclusion:

> Whoever has passed its crucible, and has come out successful from its test, has approved his title to consideration either as an honest and able thinker or a consummate orator. One or the other any man must be, who can always be sure of commanding the attention of the House. There are now just two members who can stand this test, Thad. Stevens and Winter Davis. No matter what tumult may be raging or what listlessness may prevail, neither of these gentlemen will be on his feet three minutes till every member is listening, and those from distant parts of the Chamber are crowding over toward the speaker's desk. No other member has this power over the House. Several of them come very near it; can, on special occasions, have undivided audience, and never speak without being listened to by a majority of the members; but Thad. Stevens and Winter Davis are alone sure of being always heard—at any time, under any circumstances, on any subject.

It is difficult, I think the reader will admit, to dismiss the echoes of those voices and those subjects, the echoes of a great period, feeding a young man's imagination, quickening his sense of historical values. One reflects on what it must have meant to the future editor of a powerful newspaper to sit at the centre of the events which were moulding a nation, determining the political developments on which he was to wreak the energies of his prime. Surely the man who shared in the vicious night session of the long struggle for the arming of the negroes, who followed the fortunes of the great conscription bill on the floor of the House, who saw the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, who hung daily on the settlement of grave parliamentary issues, must have stored up not only indelible impressions but priceless instruction in the art of public affairs. And outside the House he was as deeply immersed in the stream of unforgetable occurrences. He was one of those who surged around the White House on "Emancipation Night" and cheered Abraham Lincoln as he stepped out into the mist to receive the first testimony of his countrymen's approval:

> The cheers are gradually hushed, and the Man who has proclaimed the abolition of American slavery speaks. Not triumphantly—

hardly confidently. He trusts in God—and he says it reverently and humbly, as one well may, who has done so momentous a deed —he trusts in God he has made no mistake. It is now for the country to pass judgment on it, and perhaps—and he pauses as if dreading the storms to come—and perhaps to take action on it. Meantime good and brave officers and men have been battling nobly and successfully for us in the field, and he asks that foremost of all there be remembrance for them.

Every movement of Washington life came under his view, and at intervals he extended his range. I have dealt with his Gettysburg foray, noting how he had thrown himself upon it from the Columbus convention at which Vallandigham had reaped the worthless reward of his treachery. After Gettysburg he hurried from Cincinnati to New York to witness the expiring throes of the draft riots—and to call upon Greeley in an office transformed into an arsenal:

> Muskets were provided for every employee. The floor of the editorial room was littered with hand grenades, and extra bayonets were lying about on the desks like some new pattern of mammoth pen-holders. Arrangements for pouring a volume of scalding steam into the lungs of anybody attempting to force an entrance had been perfected. In the midst of all the warlike preparations, Mr. Greeley, coat off and apparently just risen from preparing a leader, was listening to the statements of his reporters as to the progress of the mob, and making suggestions for perfecting the defences of the office.

In that year he went on to Frankfort to report the inauguration of Governor Bramlette, where he overheard a Kentuckian scornfully calling him "a rank abolitionist," and presently was astounded to have the same individual cordially offer him "a prime article of old Bourbon"—a contrast destined, like many other kindred instances, to illuminate his understanding of Southern types. When Chase went home to Ohio to vote and thereby help crush Vallandigham, Reid went with him and stopped long enough in Cincinnati to write an exultant leader on the downfall of the traitor. In 1864 he went to the convention at Baltimore that renominated Lincoln, and a few weeks later saw the Democrats place McClellan and Pendleton on their ticket at Chicago. Then followed the election, the second inauguration, and, with auspicious celerity thereafter, the fall of Richmond.

The thrilling news from the Confederate capital was another trumpet call to "Agate," and he made haste to get to the city. It was not easy to make a start:

> Washington was aflame with its triumphant glow. The War Office was surrounded with a great multitude, clamoring for more news, cheering, waving hats, singing "Rally Round the Flag," embracing each other, and making the most formidable efforts to embrace—Stanton! "I forgive ye all yer sins, ye old blizzard!" shouted a jubilant soldier at the Secretary; while Seward shook him by the hand till the radical and conservative had melted into one, in the nervous, spasmodic grip; and tears stood in Stanton's eyes, as he turned from one to another to acknowledge the rush of blood-hot congratulations that had suddenly transformed him—revival though it was of the age of miracles—into the most popular man in Washington.

Reid had need of a miracle himself to get any official aid in the midst of this pandemonium, but he got it—a pass from the War Department to Richmond direct, a boon so rare just then that speculative persons offered him a hundred dollars and more for the precious bit of paper. On the boat for City Point he encountered a number of his former comrades in the "old guard" of war correspondents, and with two of these friends, Page of The Tribune and Colburn of the "World," he divided the honor of forming the van of the press into the evacuated city. At the old Spottswood House, where the rebel landlord delightedly received him, he registered his name below a swarm of rebel officers, "the first arrival direct from Washington or the North." The columns that he wrote for his paper are packed with details significant of a fearful material confusion and of the political *degringolade* implied in it. He saw everything, beginning with the outlying defenses and those thick layers of torpedoes, now marked with little red flags, through which the ambulance in which he and his companions were driven slowly made its way past endless fortifications into littered streets. He saw the crumbling walls and smoking débris of the burned part of the city, marking how the Libby Prison stood untouched amid the ruins—"a retributive Providence had further use for it." He visited the State House and Jeff Davis's late abode, snatched at the lucky chance which permitted him to explore some of the rebel archives, and talked with a multitude of the inhabitants, high and low. Calling on ante-rebellion friends, he was struck alike by their courteous hospitality and their still defiant spirit. There were people in Richmond who did not doubt that their armies would regain the city. "With none is the submission other than sullen, or forced. I have neither seen nor heard of one who was really an honest Unionist. Loyalty in Richmond must be sought outside the 'upper classes.'" He began his despatch in Richmond. As he closed it in Cincinnati the tidings of Lee's surrender were swelling through the land, and he adds a postscript which must find a place here as a characteristic expression of his point of view at the end of the war:

> Yet, even in this hour of universal exultation and generosity—when all are ready to welcome back the prodigal sons, and kill fatted calves, in the rejoicings over the Peace that dawns—I must say that no such treatment will do for Richmond. There, above all other places, must it be shown that treason leaves a stain. There were concentrated the daring spirits that conceived and conducted the rebellion which has laid waste the land. Some of them have gone, but others coolly remain, and the virus of all inheres. In a community thus tainted, the iron hand must govern. Case it in velvet, if you will, but beneath must be the iron still. Above all, let us have no hasty patchings up of a reconstructed State Government. There need be no haste in re-clothing defeated rebels with political

> power, least of all in Richmond. Some such ruler as Butler they want—milder, more diplomatic, smoother spoken if need be, but not less inexorable in his requirements, nor less clear-sighted in his exhaustive knowledge of the rebel infection.

They sound a little—these stern periods—like the ideas of an irreconcilable. As a matter of fact, there was not a trace of vengefulness in Reid's attitude toward the South when the rebellion was broken. But neither was there a trace of sentimentality in it. It was simply that, reared in the fiercest years of the antislavery movement, he had too full, too poignant, a knowledge of the evils it combated to feel lightly on any of the questions that followed in its train. And his more recent experiences had only confirmed him in the tendency which I have signalized as characteristic of him from his youth up, to think clearly and to look facts in the face. He was resting at the homestead when the blackest of all the days of the rebellion befell. Fresh from the impressions of Richmond that I have described, he looked beyond Lincoln's assassin, and in a burning editorial pointed to the dangers which, as the event proved, were to make reconstruction one of the worst chapters in our history:

> For last night's murder there will be ample retribution; but let not the vengeance that is sure to come escape the right heads. Wilkes Booth is but the ready tool; they were bigger men who prepared and dealt the blow. The spirit of the rebellion—the spirit we are now soothing with turtle-dove cooing—striving to appease with soft words—exorcising with extraordinary generosity and unasked pardon in advance,—*that* stands behind the stealthy deed in Ford's theatre, just as it prompts Johnston to continue the hopeless struggle, and Virginia States-Rights men to reassemble their Legislature. Does it indicate the pressing necessity for hastening to invest these men again with political rights? Whence comes the need for this hot haste to "reconstruct the rebel States?" Mr. Lincoln's last speech treated it as a matter of such instant importance that it would brook no delay whatever. Others have even urged that gross wrong was done to rebel States with irresponsible rebel officers at their head, already clamoring for admission, in that their representatives

were not forthwith placed on an equality with the representatives of Ohio and Massachusetts. The whole talk of the Capital has been of reorganization; the air has been vexed with the projects and counter-projects which had the common end of seeking the speediest possible reconstruction of the rebel State governments, and the re-admission of their Representatives and Senators to Congress. Why? For what sufficient reason? To what good end?

These were the thoughts in his mind when he returned to Washington, mingling with his grief. I have said enough about his early labors in Lincoln's cause to suggest the emotion with which he came back to the funeral of the murdered President. "I sat near his bier in the White House, and afterward watched from the roof of the Treasury the long procession pass through Pennsylvania Avenue and up the Capitol Hill—the ever renewed procession, that lasted for a fortnight, that swept great cities into its ranks, and crossed half the country, to lay him at last at rest, amid the scenes of his youthful struggles and triumphs." It was his last great scene, for a long time, in Washington.

CHAPTER IX

THE SOUTH AFTER THE WAR

In the spring of 1865 Reid was invited to accompany a small official party on a voyage of inspection from Fort Monroe around the whole Atlantic and Gulf coast to New Orleans, and thence up the Mississippi. After Lincoln's death this developed into a quasi-diplomatic expedition, undertaken by Chief Justice Chase for the purpose of making a confidential report to the new President on the state of the late rebellious and still desperately disorganized South. Reid went aboard the revenue cutter *Wayanda*, on which the journey was to be made, bearing a pass signed by Andrew Johnson, but he owed more to the fact that he was one of Chase's closest friends. He shared to the full in all of the leader's investigations. They were gone two months, and so interesting was the experience that on his return to the capital Reid found the old routine of his life there wanting a little in its customary savor. His health was a trifle shaken by the hard work and continuous excitement of long service in Washington. In the fall his father died, a blow so heavy that for a time all his plans were at sea. Then he recovered himself, and with the idea of turning cotton-planter in his mind, he decided to go South again and look over the field. Hugh McCulloch, secretary of the treasury, gave him a flattering letter of introduction to the provisional governors, and in order that he might claim, if necessary, some official status, Dennison, the postmaster-general, appointed him a special agent of his own department. But he had seen enough of official circles when with Chase. This time he wanted to study the people at home and "out of company dress." He took train for Richmond on perhaps the most leisurely and intimate of all his many journeyings.

He had no difficulty in getting at the objects of his search. Previous experiences in the South had taught him the excellent effect of what he called his "rebel look." The Georgia planter who mistook him for a Southerner early in his pilgrimage had more than one successor. Reid richly enjoyed the consternation of his interlocutors when he let them see their error, usually by the full confession of his "Yankee" origin and abolition principles. It is a sign of the resignation which was cultivated by most of the people he met that his candor provoked some bluster but no violence. In the cars one day he heard from a meek-looking individual what had been going on amongst a number of their fellow passengers. "Did you know those fellows got very mad at your Abolitionism? That sallow, long-haired Macon merchant wanted to have you lynched and swore roundly that tar and feathers would be too good for you." Reid asked him how it ended. "Oh a little Georgian said it was all true and you ought to be lynched, but, that since this d—d war, that thing was played out." He put it all into his letters to the "Gazette," the oddments and humors of casual intercourse, along with descriptions of town and country, and notes on cotton-raising, picturesque and practical. When this second tour was ended he assembled all his notes, overhauled those he had written on the earlier trip, and in the library of the House threw the material into a book, "After the War," which was published in this country and in London in 1866.

His first appearance between covers was well received. It disclosed him in that attitude of distrust toward *soi-disant* rebels as political timber of which I have already given some evidence. The London "Saturday Review" found him distinctly wanting in respect for "the heroic qualities displayed by the Confederates in their struggle for independence." But that self-same organ of Anglo-Southron sympathies nevertheless felt constrained to characterize the volume as "in many respects remarkable for a much more fair and temperate tone than we have found in any other expression of Northern feeling and opinion concerning the South," a judgment the more conclusive, I think, when we remember its source. The book has still a warm vitality. The life of the "old South" is depicted in it in varied colors, and there is no stint of the incidents proper to a record of personal impressions. Newspaper men seem somehow to have a way of stumbling upon occurrences which escape other mortals. I must cite in illustration an episode of the trip with Chase, and its sequel. At Newbern, North Carolina, they fell in with Sherman:

> Nervous and restless as ever, the General looked changed (and improved) since the old campaigns in the South-West. He was boiling over with pride at the performances of his army through the winter, and all the more indignant, by consequence, at the insults and injustice he imagined himself to have received in consequence of his arrangements with Johnston. "I fancied the country wanted peace," he exclaimed. "If they dont, let them raise more soldiers."
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> The General complained, and, doubtless, with some truth, if not justice, that the Government had never distinctly explained to him what policy it desired to have pursued. "I asked Mr. Lincoln explicitly, when I went up to City Point, whether he wanted me to capture Jeff. Davis, or let him escape, and in reply he told me a story."
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> That "story" may now have a historical value, and I give it therefore, as General Sherman said Mr. Lincoln told it—only promising that it was a favorite story with Mr. Lincoln, which he told many times, and in illustration of many points of public policy.
>
> "I'll tell you General," Mr. Lincoln was said to have begun, "I'll tell you what I think about taking Jeff. Davis. Out in Sangamon county there was an old temperance lecturer, who was very strict in the doctrine and practice of total abstinence. One day, after a

long ride in the hot sun, he stopped at the house of a friend, who proposed making him a lemonade. As the mild beverage was being mixed the friend insinuatingly asked if he wouldn't like just the least drop of something stronger, to brace up his nerves after the exhausting heat and exercise. 'No,' replied the lecturer. 'I couldn't think of it; I am opposed to it on principle. But,' he added, with a longing glance at the black bottle that stood conveniently at hand, 'if you could manage to put in a drop unbeknownst to me, I guess it wouldn't hurt me much.' "Now General," Mr. Lincoln concluded, "I'm bound to oppose the escape of Jeff. Davis; but if you could manage to let him slip out unbeknownst-like, I guess it wouldn't hurt me much."

"And that," exclaimed General Sherman, "is all I could get out of the Government as to what its policy was, concerning the Rebel leaders, till Stanton assailed me for Davis' escape!"

About six weeks after this colloquy with Sherman, the chief justice and his party, approaching Savannah, enjoyed the good offices of General Gillmore, the gallant artillerist of "Swamp Angel" fame. He showed them over Fort Pulaski, and that night they slept in his boat. Early next morning, when only the crew was awake, the news burst into the cabins that Jeff. Davis was alongside. The story of his arrest Reid had from the lips of his captor, standing in the gray morning within a biscuit's throw of the fallen rebel.

At New Orleans he met Sheridan, "a compact, little, big-chested, crop-headed, fiery-faced officer, flushing redder than ever when a lady addressed him." Another acquaintance in that city was Paul Morphy, the renowned chess-player, "a modest-looking little gentleman, of retiring manners, and with apparently very little to say, though the keen eyes and well-shaped head sufficiently showed the silence to be no mask for poverty of intellect." His fellow lawyers were dubious about his fame. "If he were only as good in his profession as he is at chess playing!" they exclaimed, with portentous shrugs of the shoulders. There were other interesting encounters, but I hasten on to the subject dominating the book, the question of the Southern spirit at that time. It finds concise celebration in this passage:

> I do not mean that these people are nursing a new rebellion. For many years they will be the hardest people in the civilized world to persuade into insurrection. But they nurse the embers of the old one, and cherish its ashes. They are all Union men, in the sense that they submit, (since they cant help themselves,) and want to make all they can out of their submission. But to talk of any genuine Union sentiment, any affection for the Union, any intention to go one step further out of the old paths that led to the rebellion, than they are forced out, is preposterous. They admit that they are whipped; but the honest ones make no pretence of loving the power that whipped them.

It is the judgment running through all his observations, in the drawing-rooms of wealthy planters and in roadside cabins. As Reid finished his survey of the South he parted with his last, slenderest hope of any rehabilitation promoted from the centre outward. Politically he was half inclined to give the Southerner up. Yet he perceived that the whole body politic was as wax to receive the impress of edicts from Washington until Johnson's blunders forced a bellicose reaction of sentiment; and if "After the War" is relentless in its exposure of Confederate pertinacity, it is also a candid indictment of the stupid reconstruction which went from bad to worse and finally fastened the disgrace of "carpetbaggery" upon an unhappy land. He was the more exasperated by these things, too, because he soon saw the economic possibilities of the country. The openings presented in the South for Northern capital were unsurpassed. His own course was promptly decided. At the same time he proceeded with caution. His friend Hay had invested five hundred dollars in a Florida orange-grove. Reid looked at orange-groves, including Hay's, and an enthusiastic native pointed out to him on the spot that the previous year's crop thereon was worth two thousand five hundred dollars. But before he had left Washington, Hay had told him of his financial success in Florida. It was the familiar tale of "incidental expenses," and while the orange-crop might have been, for all Hay knew, a very fine one, he had never seen an orange or received a penny from it. Sceptical of local ardor, Reid stopped looking at orange-groves. He essayed, instead, to find out if, as the current legend had it, cotton still was king.

Friendly planters proved it for him. They took him on long rides over their fields, explained their methods, gave him access to their books, and, in a word, revealed all the mysteries of their pursuit. He took the plunge then for himself, entering into partnership with his friend General Francis J. Herron, of New Orleans, and thenceforth, for two years, only a few flying trips North interrupted the administration in Louisiana and Alabama of his first business venture on a large scale. All the auguries were favorable. Some years afterward, in a chapter of Southern reminiscences, he recalled the perfection of the February day on which he crossed from Natchez to take possession, in Concordia Parish, Louisiana, of two of the three river plantations on which he dreamed of making his fortune in a year. The "mansion" in which he was to make his home was only a cottage, propped up four or five feet from the damp soil by pillars of cypress, but he was monarch of all he surveyed, and though his hundred and fifty negroes, supplied by the Freedman's Bureau, affirmed their new-born spirit of independence by calling him "Mistah" instead of "Massa," there was nothing in that to irk the soul of an abolitionist. The world was rose-colored just then, and hardly lost its happy hue even when he came to taste the miseries of breakbone fever and was condemned to hourly Gargantuan doses of quinine. That wretchedness passed, after a while, and he faced cheerfully the more serious developments of his situation. The weather, of course, was the great factor. His prospects as he got well advanced as a planter are described in the following letter:

Scotland Plantation, La.
September 11th, 1866.

My dear Mother;

The weather has been dreadfully against us;—raining almost every day. I have twelve or fourteen bales of seed cotton on hand on this plantation, so damp that I can't gin it, and the sun doesn't shine, so that I can't put it on the platforms to sun it. I have started the gins, however, this morning, and have run two or three bales through in some sort of style. It now begins to look clear, and by noon perhaps the sun may be out. On the lower plantation I have fifteen or twenty bales that I can't gin.

Here is a little cotton, taken just as it dropped from the mouth of the gin this morning. If you want to know what ginning is, conceive two big threshing machines, set in a barn, with the horse power below them, with a room as large as our whole barn into which they throw the straw, and an enormous press in it, worked by a big screw turned by mules below. Then imagine cotton fed in, instead of wheat, and the big room into which the ends of the machine project filled with the fleecy clouds of cotton, sinking in long soft banks, or floating through the air till it looks like the heaviest snow storm you ever saw. Then remember that, in good weather, these gins start at daylight and run till dark, day after day and week after week, with no stoppage whatever except to change mules three times a day,—the men hastily eating their meals while the mules are changing—that there are more men and women about such than it would take to run an ordinary threshing machine—and that everything is kept constantly rushed to its highest speed,—and you may have some idea of what we have to keep up, every day from now to Christmas, to get out the crop.

I am running four gins, two here by horse-power, and two at Fish Pond by steam. Meantime I keep big gangs, 50 in one, 70 in each of the others, out picking all the time, and weigh the cotton picked by each, twice a day, before it is emptied into the wagons, to be hauled to the gin. Of course my overseers do the work, but I have to keep a constant supervision over everything.

I shipped about four thousand dollars' worth of cotton Saturday. As soon as we get good weather, I shall ship not less than fifteen to eighteen thousand dollars' worth per week. In this way, after a while, I'll get back the money I've put in, and perhaps some more. Love to all.

Your affectionate son,

Whitelaw Reid.

It was a vain hope. Protected from the Mississippi on the front, the most ingenious system of embankments was not proof against the swamp in the rear. Reid's predecessors had managed in the year before to rescue three hundred out of twelve hundred acres of cotton land. He saved barely two hundred more. And when, on the receding of the waters, he planted in the ooze, it was just in time to have the cotton beautifully fresh and tender for the worms. When the latter came they covered the ground ankle-deep. The planter's golden prospects were swept away in a night. Though on trying again, in Alabama, he restored his losses and managed to close up his investments without disaster, he bade farewell to cotton-growing, richer chiefly in that precious commodity, experience.

I would say that he returned to his pen, but the truth is that he had never abandoned it. The man born with the writing instinct in his bosom never disobeys its promptings, and least of all does the experienced journalist miss an opportunity to exercise his craft. In the midst of his troubles as a planter Reid heard one day the call of his profession. Business took him for a short visit to New Orleans in the midsummer of 1866, and there, by the turn of fate which brings the trained correspondent face to face with sensational events, he came full upon the historic massacre growing out of the conflict between whites and blacks over the convention to settle the filling of two seats in the United States Senate. The result was a despatch to the "Gazette." Returning to the plantation, he was for a while, at least, detached again from journalism, but the writer in him, as I have said, never slept, and, in fact, all through this period had a peculiarly powerful incentive. As early as the summer of 1863 he had been visited in Washington by Mr. William H. Moore, member of a leading firm of publishers in Cincinnati, and requested to prepare a work on the services rendered by Ohio to the Union during the Rebellion. His own experience had supplied him with much of the material for such a volume. Mr. Moore undertook to procure for him all the books, documentary matter, personal statements, and the like, that would be needed to amplify his resources. Agents were sent out for this purpose, to visit the armies in the field, and, on the close of the war, to talk with generals and other officers, and with private soldiers. An immense amount of data was thus secured. I have before me a typical and deeply interesting fragment. It is the sheaf of laboriously written pages in which the old tanner of Galena sets forth with obvious pride and some combativeness "facts relative to the early history of my son, Gen. U. S. Grant."

On his plantation, in the intervals of labor on his crops, Reid wrote "Ohio in the War," in two stout volumes of over a thousand pages each. In the first he recited the history of the State during the war, and in biographies of the generals she gave to the Northern armies not only sketched their personal traits but outlined their campaigns. In the second he compiled the rosters of Ohio regiments and companies, and framed records of their services. This part of the work is of value chiefly for purposes of reference. The first volume is an historical study in the broad sense, really a history of the war, for Ohio, as all men know, gave the nation an extraordinary number of its military leaders in its time of trial. Dealing with a theme of which, in so many of its aspects, he had the liveliest personal knowledge, and painting his portraits of Grant, Sherman, Buell, Sheridan, Garfield, Rosecrans, McPherson, Custer, McDowell, and a troop of others—not forgetting his pet aversion, McClellan—from the point of view of one who had met most of them face to face and had lived through the very hours of their achievements, he gave to what might have been a conventional record the body and energy of a piece of creative literature. His reviewers did not fail to note the persistence in it of "Agate's" readiness to call a spade a spade, the fearlessly critical style of his analyses, but they united in praise of his fairness. The "Atlantic" said of it that it was "unscrupulously frank," and that considering what popular histories usually were, it was amazingly free from idolatry. "Plainly," the Boston critic remarked, with mild humor, "it is Mr. Kinglake among modern historians, rather than the Rev. Mr. Abbott or the Rev. Mr. Headley, whom Mr. Reid has had in mind." Rather, indeed! The "Nation," beginning then to be known for the carefulness of its literary judgments, was lavish of appreciation, and pronounced the opinion that no military library in America could be complete without it. It pleased Reid to learn from his friend Wendell Garrison that this was the conclusion of no layman, but of a late officer of Massachusetts volunteers. Garfield's letter to him I may also quote, for its purely personal interest:

Washington,
March 5th, 1868.

My dear Reid:

I have this evening, for the first time, seen your "Ohio in the War," and have just completed your sketch of me. The bravery with which you have handled Grant and Sherman is equalled by the generous boldness with which you express your approval of their good points; and, what is still more marked, you do not hesitate to speak strongly of the merits of those who never reached a first place in military achievements.

You have comprehended and expressed more perfectly the spirit and purposes of my life than has ever been done by any one before—even my most intimate and life-long friends. If I dared to hope it would not be regarded by the public as too complimentary, I should be wholly satisfied. At two or three points in the reading I was alarmed at your comparisons, lest they should hurt some of my friends, for instance, Cox and Monroe. I am very glad you noticed my much speaking. It was a serious blunder, which I have been trying for years to atone for. I can every day see it in new members, as old ones then saw it in me. . . .

I have been thinking that you and I came to the surface of public life about the same time in Columbus, and have been able to know more of the development of each other than usually falls to the lot of men in different lines of life. My work lies diffused, *membra disjecta,* destined to perish with the using; yours is crystallized into the enduring form of a literary monument which will be more valuable when you are dead than it is now. I look upon it, however, valuable as it is, only as an earnest of what you are destined some day to achieve. If your life and health are spared, I hope and believe you may some day conclude the last paragraph of a work to which the world will apply the words that Thucydides applied to his history—"an everlasting possession." The road to that lies through study, travel and patient labor.

Very sincerely your friend,

J. A. Garfield.

The second of Garfield's requirements for success in literature was surely fulfilled by his friend in the last year of his activities as "Agate," a year of almost incessant travel. On the resumption of his relations with the "Gazette" his functions as chief editorial writer, joined to the comfortable situation of a stockholder in a highly prosperous paper, ought to have given him the sensations of a storm-tossed mariner safe in port. Instead he was in Washington, reporting the trial of Andrew Johnson; in Chicago at the Republican convention which nominated Grant and Colfax; in New York, when the Ku Klux Democracy put up Horatio Seymour and Frank Blair; in Cincinnati again—on the editorial page—and then once more in New York, this time to stay. Private affairs took him to New Hampshire and professional duties drew him again and again to the capital. In sheer movement 1868 was one of the busiest years of his life, well calculated to make his arduous struggle as a cotton-grower seem the lightest of idyls.

The most important of his subjects in that year was, naturally, the impeachment. He treated it in an extraordinary series of despatches, remarkable alike for the animation and fulness with which it reproduced the scene and for the gallery of portraits it assembled. The character of the whole of this farewell exploit of his I may illustrate with a few passages from his tribute to the leading speaker in the President's behalf:

> Figure to yourselves a slender, nervous, hollow-chested person of about the medium height, straight as an arrow, with what is called a "long head," (narrow from ear to ear, but swelling nobly above the temples), covered with short black hair, with a pinched, parchment-skinned face, that always reminds one of the pictures and descriptions of the Opium Eater, De Quincey. The nose is long and hooked, and the chin projects, as if half-minded to meet it. This is Evarts as he stands up at the counsel's table to address the Senate for a man whom personally he detested, but whose defense he believes to be legitimate.
>
> His voice is more remarkable than his appearance. It seems to be a shrill tenor, of very little volume, but it is wonderfully well managed. The enunciation is simply perfect; and so this thin-voiced, narrow-chested speaker, rarely rising above conversational tones, is heard with a distinctness that becomes a positive pleasure. No man ever seemed to speak more easily; sometimes, in the sarcastic or more impressive passages, he throws some force into his utterance; but generally without seeming effort the sentences fall from his lips, slow and rounded, like drops from a fountain, in a steady, easy succession, every word in its place, every clause polished, without a moment's hesitation for an expression, or a single recalled phrase. It is seldom stirring, but it is throughout one of the rarest and most attractive of intellectual displays, the perfection of unimpassioned extempore speaking.
>
> He gesticulates freely, but not often with any vehemence. A favorite position is with the left hand thrust into the back pocket of his frock coat, while the right, holding the gold-rimmed eye glasses which he uses whenever he has occasion to refer to his notes or read an authority, comes down upon the audience at every emphatic

> word of the sentence. His whole manner is that of perfect ease, of perfect satisfaction with his audience and himself, of perfect deliberation. Nothing, it seems, could hurry this man—nothing disconcert his easy dignity and self-possession. . . .
>
> Still, with all the delight, one felt more and more distinctly two impressions concerning this remarkable effort. Things were said in the daintiest of ways, with the choicest selections of words, with the most delightful humor, with sarcasm as good natured as it was severe; but, after all, there was what I think Artemus Ward called the sense of muchness. The things said were well said; but it took too long to say them. The sarcastic hits were inimitable but it took too long to lay the train for them. In fact many passages were verbose—a fault very natural to one who speaks with such perfect ease; for it often holds true of speaking as of writing, that the easy writing makes very hard reading. And, besides being verbose, it lacked conclusive force.

The impeachment offered, as I have said, the chief occasion for Reid's exercise of his descriptive powers just prior to his final removal to New York, and the sketch of Evarts is a representative example of the style he had developed in the press gallery at Washington. He would hardly have migrated to New York, however, if his years as a correspondent had not endowed him with something more than a style. "I am a good deal of a jack-at-all-trades in journalism," he wrote in a private letter at that time, "having done everything about such a paper as the 'Gazette' save running the six-cylinder press." The discipline had given him a rich equipment. As the frequent quotations I have made from his despatches have shown, the experience which had sharpened his instruments of expression, strengthened by the thought and patient labor of which Garfield speaks, had made him not only the observer but the philosophical critic of public men and their acts. I close this chapter, therefore, not with a fragment but with a full-length study.

In August, 1868, Thaddeus Stevens died. Reid had long known the old man, had witnessed some of the most stirring episodes in his later congressional life, when the lion was aging but could still put forth a lion's strength, and he had seen the stanch leader in parliamentary conflict maintain his last great fight, when Andrew Johnson was summoned to the bar of the Senate. Immediately on receiving in Cincinnati the news of the statesman's death he announced it in an editorial which was itself a well-reasoned tribute. A few days later, when the body of Stevens was committed to the grave, he wrote the "character" which I reproduce below:

> "These were the two half men of their time," says Mr. Carlyle in one of those noble essays written before his intellect began to run from the dregs. "Who so should combine the intrepid candor and decisive scientific clearness of Hume, with the reverence, the love, and devout humility of Johnson were the whole man of a new time. Till such whole man arrive for us, and the distracted time admit of such, might the Heavens but bless poor England with half men worthy to tie the shoe-latchets of these, resembling these even from afar!"
>
> Mr. Stevens seems to us one of the half men of our time. His great characteristic was will rather than judgment—conscience rather than insight. We shall not greatly err if we look to Daniel Webster as his complement. Who so should combine the intrepid will and the faithful conscience of Stevens, with the massive judgment, the penetrating insight, the broad statesmanship of Webster were the whole man of a new time. Till such whole man arrive for us, and the distracted time admit of such, might the Heavens but bless poor America with half men worthy to tie the shoe-latchets of these, resembling these even from afar.
>
> It will be seen that we do not regard Mr. Stevens as having been a great statesman. He was not, indeed, even a great party leader. He was often at variance with his party; he rarely possessed its entire confidence; and not a few of his triumphs were won in spite of it, by carrying his personal following over to the Democracy in a combination against it. Inexorable will, a high purpose, tact, parliamentary skill, an earnestness so striking as to be persuasive, and a reckless determination to carry his points at any cost—these various and sometimes almost contradictory qualities made him a leader of men.
>
> There were a score of prominent Republicans, at the opening of the Thirty-ninth Congress, as vehemently opposed to Mr. Johnson's provisional government system of reconstruction as Mr. Stevens;

but there was no one so remorseless in the determination to shut out the Southern states, definitely and peremptorily, leaving not a loophole of entrance to any assault, till they should fully comply with the Congressional requirements. Scores of Republicans seemed as earnest from the outset in seeking the death of slavery and the enfranchisement of the negro; but no one impressed friends and foes alike as being so penetrated with an enthusiastic and almost romantic devotion to this cause as the highest, purest work a public man could accomplish. In almost any Congress in which he served there were a score of Republicans as well versed in parliamentary law as himself; but none combined his tact for yielding when to yield was good policy, and for defying majorities when pluck and defiance could carry the day, with the utter indifference to all considerations save his own, that enabled him to use his power in contemptuous scorn of appeals to which almost any other man would have yielded. In public affairs he seemed, indeed, to be proof against all appeals—to be made of frosty intellect and a frostier conscience, with which no thing of warmth had any affinity. He would co-operate as heartily with his bitterest enemy as with his warmest friend; he would use his advantages as mercilessly, when it served his turn, upon his warmest friend as upon his bitterest enemy.

He was not endowed with extraordinary intellectual gifts beyond many others who will never achieve his fame. He was an indifferent scholar, and a blunt, unpolished writer. It has been common to speak of him as eloquent; but when his speeches are seen, disconnected from the man and his surroundings, in the cold mausoleum of the "Congressional Globe," they quite often look like second rate performances. Industry and tact, combined with his wonderful will and his fervid devotion, did more for him than volume of brains or fineness of culture.

Withal he was wonderfully aided by a tart tongue. Here again the mere printed reports of his speeches fail to confirm the reputation which he enjoyed and deserved. There was much in his manner, and much more in the surroundings to give point to his acrid assaults. Then his domineering way and his fame for repartee went far with him; till at last, when a peculiar smile was seen upon his face, the House would take his joke on credit and break out into a roar of laughter, though not half of them had heard it. His wit was mostly very personal and sometimes malicious, while his readiness was marvellous. Men learned to fear him as the most dangerous person in Congress to interrupt; and the instances were very rare in which any one who grappled with him did not come out second best. Sometimes he was ugly and malignant without provocation—through pure perversity as his enemies were wont to say. Thus he was once debating a subject on which Wadsworth of Kentucky had spoken, and chanced to refer to some argument of "the eloquent and distinguished gentleman from Kentucky." Mr. Wadsworth, intent on not being misrepresented, rose to inquire if the honorable gentleman referred to him. "No," was the instant reply in Mr. Stevens's most cold-blooded manner. "I did not refer to you. I referred to the gentleman's colleague, Mr. Crittenden, whom I always delight to call eloquent and distinguished—because he is so." Wadsworth was young then; and through that Congress he never recovered from the stab.

Yet it was observed by those who had watched the old man the longest, that he rarely made attacks. So long as people were content to let him alone he would keep the peace. But woe to the unlucky wight who ventured rashly to provoke his displeasure.

He rarely set for himself any bounds in his denunciation. Sometimes his tact taught him to damn an opponent with contempt rather than with denunciation, as when he replied to Mr. Johnson's famous speech inquiring why "you do not hang Thad. Stevens," with a thoroughly good-tempered and deliciously comic defense of Mr. Johnson against the slanderers who traduced the President of the United States by inventing such a speech and putting it into his mouth. But where his principles were concerned rather than himself his invective more often partook of a ferocity almost brutal, as when he said of Chief Justice Taney, before the grass had grown over his grave, that he was condemned to eternal infamy as well as to eternal flame. He was ready to attack anybody. No station, no character, no services to himself, no influence could deter him. Only at the last session he was balked in an effort to get through a resolution increasing the salaries of the House employees twenty per cent by the opposition of Mr. Greeley, than whom, through a large part of his career, he had no warmer or more powerful friend; straightway he denounced Mr. Greeley in the House as an old scarecrow, who had come down from New York to frighten simpletons.

But with all his public bitterness he was in private warm-hearted, often forgiving, and often unexpectedly generous. Many a Southern rebel, returning to Washington after the surrender, was received by Mr. Stevens almost with open arms in spite of his inflexible hostility to their political claims. His old Southern associates in Congress, especially, received from him the heartiest of welcomes. Political bitterness, indeed, he scarcely ever carried into private life. He lived in the same town with ex-President Buchanan, against whom he had often inveighed almost virulently; yet they were on pleasant social terms, and one of his latest acts was to repel the insinuation that he wished to lay one straw in the way of the payment by Congress of the accustomed honors to the dead Chief Magistrate. Still he had his small jealousies and resentments; of which perhaps the most noticeable were his feelings against persons in high station, distinguished for more dignified character, or aristocratic habits, or profound scholarship than himself. Ben Wade was always a man much more after his heart than Charles Sumner. He liked General Butler far better than John A. Bingham. He respected rather than admired Winter Davis; and he never could forego his sneer at Chief Justice Chase's deportment, even at the time when they were in the fullest political accord.

We have denied to Mr. Stevens pre-eminence in intellect, culture or eloquence. It remains to show wherein his great strength lay. His parliamentary qualifications, his tact, his wonderful readiness of repartee, his ferocity of invective, his acknowledged vigor of intellect, will not wholly account for his position as, during the reconstruction, if not during the war, the most influential character in American politics. The secret of his strength, we imagine, is to be found in that source to which mere politicians so seldom look—his high, all-embracing devotion to a noble idea. Before the present generation of politicians was out of its infant schools Mr. Stevens, in the Constitutional Convention of Pennsylvania, staked his whole career as a public man on a fervid opposition to the disfranchisement of the few negroes resident in that State. His defeat was the great victory of his life. He threw the whole intensity of his intense nature into the struggle; and when he was beaten stood out before the Commonwealth, the solitary member of her Convention who would not sign the new Constitution because it refused justice to the negro. That was in 1836. From that day he was committed to the idea of securing justice to an oppressed race. It has transfused his life and made his career glorious forever.

An acute critic has said that his devotion to the slave came rather from a hatred of the oppressor than a love of liberty. This distinction is valuable for it serves to explain the grim features of his character and work. The state of Pennsylvania has reason to remember Mr. Stevens with gratitude as the founder of her common school system. But it is to his life-long hostility to slavery and to the determination, at last taking the form of a religious zeal, with which he fought the slave's battles, that Mr. Stevens owes his sure place in history. That place will not be the highest, even for this generation and this Republic, but it will be high. He will be credited with a rank second to none in sustaining the war. He will be reckoned the master and more than any other one man the author of the reconstruction that followed.

On these his fame must rest. He was out of place as Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. This journal led in the demand for his removal from that position, and its only regret is that the demand was not sooner urged. His financial notions were utterly crude, and the zeal with which he supported them only made him the more dangerous. Within the last year his intellect often seemed dulled. The impeachment called out one of his best speeches; but on financial matters, as well as on details of Reconstruction, he was confused and sometimes contradictory. It would have been better for his fame if he had been out of Congress a year ago. He was full of projects but without a policy.

Such—set down after a very imperfect and unsatisfactory fashion—we consider to have been the leading characteristics of Mr. Stevens's life and works. His directness, his scorn of cant, his honesty, distinguished him from common politicians. His ability, his earnestness, his courage and his long services, lifted him to the front rank of the public men of our time. But his sublime devotion to the cause of an oppressed race, the iron purpose, and the conscientious zeal with which, in season and out of season, he labored for it, made him worthy of a place second to none in the war and foremost of all in the Reconstruction. Yet it is for purpose, courage, devotion, not for broad statesmanship that we can commend him. After all, he was only one of Carlyle's half men.

In one of his "Imaginary Conversations" Landor puts into the mouth of Alfieri a notable summary of the qualities constituting a great writer—"adequate expression of just sentiments, plainness without vulgarity, elevation without pomp, sedateness without austerity, alertness without impetuosity." These were specifically the qualities which Whitelaw Reid considered the objects of the journalist no less than of the "great writer." His characterization of Thaddeus Stevens exhibits in concise form the progress that he had himself made in the cultivation of them when he was ready to enter upon the most responsible years of his editorial career.

CHAPTER X

EARLY RELATIONS WITH THE TRIBUNE

A man is known by the opportunities he rejects as well as by those which he accepts. Amongst the various elements of character and circumstance that account for Reid's progress much weight is to be attached to his constitutional unwillingness to be stampeded into any engagement. He was never in a hurry. The prospect of an immediate advantage, no matter how tempting, never distracted his mind from consideration of the permanent issues involved in a given proposal. It was not the question of material interest that concerned him, but the deeper, more serious responsibility which a man has for the direction he takes in life. I may quote on this point some typical observations he made in 1876, when he was in full control of The Tribune. The late E. V. Smalley was at that time on the Washington staff of the paper. He received an offer of the agency of the Associated Press at the capital, and before making up his mind wrote to Reid for advice. The letter in which this was very frankly given to him minimized none of the benefits appertaining to the post. It was one of unquestionable power and consideration. Nine out of ten of the correspondents in Washington would consider it an enormous prize. But the man who took it needed to have a great love of drudgery and to be, besides, a man without opinions. Continuing thus to look at the problem in its larger aspects, Reid wrote to him as follows: "I don't think the question of salary amounts to a great deal. I can express this opinion all the more frankly, since when I held a position in Washington very similar to yours I repeatedly declined offers of from one half more to three times the salary I was receiving, beginning with the leading editorship of the St. Louis 'Democrat,' and ending with an offer on a guarantee for a term of years of a salary of $10,000 a year as chief editor of the New Orleans 'Times.' On the whole that success gives most comfort while you are winning it, and counts for most in the end, which is made in the line of one's natural tendencies, and which not making haste to get on too rapidly builds all the firmer the foundation for the coming superstructure." His own gravitation to The Tribune is seen to take on something in the nature of fate and predestination as one looks back at it, but the principle enunciated in the foregoing passage has also to be reckoned in the balance.

Not all the editorships which were open to him before he elected to come to New York invite special comment, but one of them, offered as early as 1865, awakens an association of ideas too piquant to be neglected here. A close friend of Reid's during the war was George L. Stearns, the antislavery paladin of Whittier's elegy, who "forgot his own soul for others," who counted it the proudest act of his life that he gave good old John Brown every pike and rifle he carried to Harper's Ferry, and who labored above all others to place on a practical basis the policy of enlisting negro soldiers in the Northern armies, organizing and systematizing the work. He was one of the largest individual stockholders in the company that founded the "Nation," and when the new weekly was being planned he remembered the young journalist whose work in the thick of things at Gettysburg and at Washington had won his admiration. In a letter of Whitelaw Reid's to me the practical outcome of this remembrance is thus recalled: "The editorship was first offered to George William Curtis, and next, by the unanimous vote of the men raising the capital, to me. It was only after I had declined that the offer to Mr. Godkin was made. I have no doubt he made on the whole a better paper than I should have done at that time, for I was still very young; but I am sure he made a worse one in some respects!" For better or for worse Reid would have made it a totally different sheet. I can easily enough imagine him in some political tabernacle other than that to which, as a matter of fact, he was always faithful—but I can't imagine him a Mugwump.

The launching of the "Nation" was sympathetically recorded by Reid. "I do not remember to have ever seen so nearly perfect a first number," he wrote. But he was altogether too red-blooded an American to have been happy with the Brahminical caste which took the paper under its special protection. I doubt if he would have completely harmonized even with Stearns himself. "He was one of those rarely unselfish and high principled men," Reid wrote me, "of whom the country never has too many; a man who deserved greater recognition than he ever got during the anti-slavery struggle and the war. That is not to say that I fully endorse either his ideas or his methods." The sincerity and thoroughgoing nature of Reid's abolitionism I have shown in earlier pages. Sitting down at the famous Saturday afternoon dinner-table of Frank Bird's Radical Club in Boston he was welcomed as one of themselves by such men as Sumner, Boutwell, Governor Andrew, and John Murray Forbes. But his whole experience and training, after his first ecstatic plunge into the great controversy of his youth, tended to make him very cool-minded in his dealings with the leaders whom he was wont to designate to me as "the New England come-outers." With Stearns he was bound to go a certain distance. There were other figures in that circle from whom, sooner or later, he could not but part company. I don't think he ever quite forgave Garrison for his lurid flourish about the Constitution as a covenant with death and an agreement with hell. That sort of rhetoric seemed to him to take the subject into a region of emotionalism inimical to constructive statesmanship.

Though Horace Greeley was no niggard of highly colored speech in the heat of debate, there was a fund of practicality at the bottom of his eloquence, and it was this, very largely, that drew Reid to The Tribune when the time came. The editorship of the "Nation" could not tempt him away from his cotton venture in the South. It did not open the right door. The tradition of The Tribune was exactly what he had been forming himself for from his youth up, a tradition based on patriotism plus common sense, and directed with an intensely American vigor toward the really effective settlement of tangible problems. He was ever sceptical of the ministrations of purely academic publicists, those etiolated oracles of the coteries that have been educated beyond their intellects. "They evolve theories of how people live, of how they ought to live," a shrewd commentator has said, "and both sets of theories are mainly cobwebs." In Greeley's environment, Reid well knew, there were at all events no cobwebs, despite the old Fourierite symposia which had graced the columns of The Tribune in the forties. It was, in short, a summons to the one opening fulfilling his ideal in the journalism of the country that he received when Greeley sought him out.

It is an interesting point in his relation to The Tribune that from the first Greeley most ardently wanted him in the office and tried repeatedly to get him there. Wherever Reid was, the discerning old editor kept an eye upon him, watching for the favorable opportunity to revive in more permanent form the alliance I have noted in a preceding chapter. His eagerness for every clew to Reid's plans is disclosed in a note sent to Schuyler Colfax in 1866: "S. C. If you ever get a letter from Whitelaw Reid that you can spare a body, please enclose it to, Yours, Horace Greeley." If he could not lure his young friend to New York, then he wanted to employ him in Washington. The moment he heard that Reid was abandoning a planter's life he hastened to write him, inquiring as to just how far he was involved with the "Gazette." He did not forget Reid's interests. "I would not have you weaken your hold on the 'Gazette,'" he wrote, "till you are wholly sure of something better, for I know yours is a good and strong concern, whose dividends of late beat The Tribune's." But he wished that the situation might be cleared up to his way of thinking, and that at least they might meet in Washington, where John Russell Young, his managing editor, was at the time, and where "both he and I could frequently meet you and try to shape matters to mutual satisfaction." "Well," he concludes, "I will try to be in Cincinnati during the winter; the time will be foreknown. Will you try to be there when I am? If the mountain will not come to Mahomet, etc. I infer that nothing can be definitely done at present; but, whenever you have the money that you do not borrow, I hope you will authorize me to buy one or two shares in The Tribune for you. I believe it will pay, even in 1868, and thereafter. And I believe you are mistaken as to my withdrawing from the active direction of The Tribune in 1869. I guess I shall be able to do it. At all events, I hope to try." Surely these were remarkable words, and a little more than flattering, with their closing hint as to the possible accessibility of the blue ribbon of American journalism, for the wearer of that ribbon to write to a man just thirty years old.

They were written late in 1867. At the same time

Garfield was urging Reid to settle in Washington. "I feel as I have felt for a long time," he wrote, "that this is the theatre for your best efforts, at least for the present. You have so many friends who will be rejoiced to see you—and so many opportunities will open for you that I can hardly think any other place can do so much for you." His friends at the capital were, in fact, so active, that presently there was some talk of his taking the editorship of the "Chronicle." Meanwhile Young added his adjurations to Greeley's. Why, oh why, wouldn't Reid come to New York? Did he have an angry creditor or two in the city, whose vengeance he dreaded, or was he a defaulting director of Erie, in terror of one of Judge Barnard's injunctions? "We are sorely in want of a strong man," he added. "I cannot say positively how you would do with brevier, as my only knowledge of your work is correspondence, but if you could do half as well editorially you would make a very enviable reputation here. I know no man in the American profession of journalism that I would rather have on The Tribune staff than yourself."

In default of getting him at once on the editorial page they persuaded him to write a life of Grant in a pamphlet of some fourscore pages, to be circulated as a campaign document. In April, when he went with Greeley to the great banquet given by the press of the country to Charles Dickens, on the eve of the novelist's return to England, Young tried to talk shop between courses and humorously repined because they were all too absorbed in the convivialities of the occasion. Greeley's frequent notes at this period are so characteristic that I must quote one of them:

New York,
April 29th, 1868.

Friend Reid:

I mean to be down next week—that is if the Impeachment Trial shall come to an end. I do not want to visit Washington again while that nightmare is upon us. And if the Senators should spring a leak, as is threatened, I may hold off a week longer. Look for me at Mrs. Greeley's rooms on the morning of the day after the verdict is rendered.

Yours,
HORACE GREELEY.

Poor Greeley! As history sadly relates, the country wasn't released from that "nightmare" until nearly the end of May. But then at last the long negotiations came to a head and Reid accepted the position of "first writing editor," with the understanding that he was to receive orders from no one excepting Greeley or Young. "As previously talked about between us," he also said, "I should of course hope for some favorable opportunity to buy Tribune stock." When he joined the staff, in the early fall of 1868, the presidential campaign was rising to its climax. He came to the paper in the midst of just such a political conflict as he loved. A generous proportion of the leaders in The Tribune which promoted the election of Grant and Colfax were his. Upon an issue of this kind, however, I need not now dwell. At this time, and for several years thereafter, until his assumption of full control of the paper, I am chiefly concerned with his more intimate experiences in his new environment.

It was our great period of "personal journalism," when the name of a newspaper of any power immediately recalled to readers anywhere in the country the name of its editor. Some of the more conspicuous leaders were nearing the last of their battles—Raymond, of the "Times," who died in June, 1869, and the elder James Gordon Bennett, of the "Herald," who survived him only about three years, and Greeley himself. But George Jones, with the aid of Louis Jennings, preserved for a while something of the vigor of Raymond's policy, and the younger Bennett was not unworthy of his sire. Dana, of the "Sun," was in his early prime. Sam

Bowles, of the Springfield "Republican," was waxing ever more expert in his venomous sprightliness, and in the columns of the "Sun" Dana showed that he was in a fair way to surpass him. Henry Watterson, in the Louisville "Courier-Journal," and Murat Halstead, in the Cincinnati "Commercial," like Reid, their friend, were making the old tradition their own, and infusing new life into it. Manton Marble, W. H. Hurlbert, Horace White, E. L. Godkin, A. K. McClure, Joseph Medill, and divers others were, in a very acute sense, flourishing. Most of these men were good, some of them were brilliant, writers. They were all confident and combative. An interchange of compliments between any two of them was apt to bristle with well-sharpened points, and the other members of the company were quick to make their contributions to the fray. Irony, more or less subtle, was a common enough weapon. Sarcasm with nothing at all subtle about it was even commoner. I do not mean to suggest that these eminent publicists were forever abusing one another, but simply that it was an energetic and notably candid era, in which a newspaper "spoke its mind" with robust freedom—the mind being unmistakable as that of an individual known of all men and richly colored with idiosyncrasy. There were verbal savageries practised, too, in those days, on the disappearance of which the historian now looks with a certain philosophic complacence. We have changed all that. Personal slang-whanging is pretty nearly as dead as the duello. But there was a biting freshness in the air which was not unwholesome. The journalist resolved to hold his own had to have a head on his shoulders, and, withal, courage, endurance, and consummate readiness.

Greeley, a warrior to the end, and dying almost literally with his armor on, made his paper successful through the sheer force of his personality and his victorious habit in the general journalistic mêlée. Yet the stinging, quotable things he was always saying in print were not by any means the principal source of The Tribune's influence. The strength of the paper, founded in the first place on its antislavery leadership, resided in the merit it possessed in all its departments. Godkin, recalling his impressions of The Tribune, formed when as a foreigner he first studied the newspapers of New York, has left perhaps the best characterization of it: "The paper was an institution more like the Comédie Française than anything I have ever known in the journalistic world. The writers were all, as it were, partners in a common enterprise, and Greeley, though all-powerful, was simply looked upon as *primus inter pares*. . . . He sacrificed everything, advertisers, subscribers, and all else, to what he considered principle. . . . During the three or four years before the war to get admission to the columns of The Tribune almost gave the young writer a patent of literary nobility." As a matter of fact the desirability of access to the columns of The Tribune was as widely recognized after the war as before it. I have delved a good deal in the history of its contributors. Surveyed *en masse*, and over a long period, their names read like an index to some manual of American letters.

Reid settled down in this Française at his ease and well content, though not without thoughts, curiously, of other ambitions. His mood at the outset is reflected in his correspondence with Garfield. "I see your handprints in The Tribune," wrote the latter, shortly after the election, "and am anxious to know how you are enjoying your new field and what is the outlook." The reference to the outlook points to the fact that even then the idea was in the air that Reid would by and by be advanced to a more commanding rôle in the management of the paper. How he was occupied, and what his reflections were, these fragments will show:

New York,
December 27th, 1868.

My dear General:

I wrote all the articles assailing Morton, excepting the one over Mr. Greeley's own signature. He was away in Canada when the speech was delivered, and of course I had to take up—not exactly the cudgels for him, but his cudgels, which is a slightly different matter. I could only take his premises, and from them bombard Morton's conclusions. Still, I went after M. *con amore*. He seems to me an unprincipled demagogue, of large ability and utter unscrupulousness; and I think his tortuous record both on Reconstruction and Finance sufficient evidence of these characteristics.

Everything is done here to make my position pleasant. My own theory of H. G's policy is that I am a "Rod in Pickle,"—useful mainly to show the Powers that are what might be,—and so gently terrify them into doing well. I do not think he wants me to displace ——, only to show him that he could be displaced at a moment's notice. Still, there are some of the stockholders who believe the gossip of the evening papers, that I am to go in soon after the 1st of January. I can't say that I greatly desire it. For the present I am doing well,—pecuniarily and in the way of experience and influence. For the future, I still look longingly to a chance for study and careful literary work. . . .

Faithfully yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

New York,
February 7th, 1869.

My dear General:

I find I am getting rather more credit than I desire for "slashing articles." In particular I hear that Wells attributes The Tribune's criticisms to me. In point of fact, I have written scarcely anything about him, excepting the jocular paragraph in reply to Delmar's complaint that we compared him to Wells, in which I revived the old story about the fellow who didn't like being compared to Judas, and the retort, "Well, if you don't like it, what do you suppose Judas thinks of it?" But I can tell Mr. Wells that if he doesn't call off his dogs, big and little (in the last category is to be included Mr. Don Piatt) we can say of him as I said in that paragraph of Delmar, —"if we ever do undertake to give him full and exact justice, he will never write to us asking for any more."

I do my full share of hitting heads when I see them, but I don't do all that sort of thing, by a good deal. I am writing on all sorts of subjects. "Cuba for the Cubans" was my last leader, though I shall probably write another tonight. About three fourths of the short editorial paragraphs in every paper are mine. The work is pleasant; and I am having a quiet and agreeable winter. Still, I am sometimes haunted by my old feeling that I might better be at magazine and book work, if I could afford it. Nothing could be more agreeable than my personal relations.

Faithfully yours,
WHITELAW REID.

The haunting continued, as frequent passages in his letters to Garfield clearly show, and he would have to take refuge in Kinglake or Buckle to quell his doubts. Not even the joys of reading could invariably ease the chafing of what sometimes proved just a wearying yoke. "Every now and then the old feeling comes over me of wanting to run away from newspaper offices, and all manner of hard work, and lounge on my farm in the Miami Valley." What tired journalist has not fallen into this dejected mood? But the zest of the work is perennial, and Reid had it in generous measure. In the same letter from which I have just quoted his pastoral aspiration he says to Garfield: "Read The Tribune today, and especially the article on the celebration at Derry, headed 'Old Wood to Burn.' H. G. did not write it as most people will think he did." There were numberless editorials of Reid's in those days which readers were wont to ascribe to H. G.—they had in them so much fighting force. When he had written one of them the blues had been shaken off and he must have smiled over his own yearnings for rural idleness.

Besides, there was always the cheering stimulus of contact with Greeley, Young, and the rest of an incomparable staff. Young, of whose brilliant work on The Tribune Reid used to speak with high appreciation when he talked with me of the paper's past, had a pretty faculty for lightening the pressure of hard daily tasks. "John was just a man of genius, gentle and peaceable, with no war in him at all," Colonel Watterson once told me, and there is much quiet humor in the few notes that survive to illustrate the comradeship between him and Reid. A reminder for an editorial runs: "Don't forget that rap on the bronze knuckles of Mr. Oakes Ames, the Chicopee foundry man in Mass." And in regard to an article of his own—"I can change the names in it and make it a eulogy upon Grant or an obituary of Louis Napoleon." Leaving for a stay in Washington, some weeks before Grant's inauguration, he offers help to Reid, who is left in charge, and rambles on in this vein: "If I can fathom the mysteries of the inscrutable Ulysses, I shall probably send you a mysterious, semi-official illumination of the new Government, but I make no promise on that score. If I shall follow my own tendencies, which have been headachey for the last three weeks, I should instantly seek out the genial Spofford in the alcoves of the Library, there being no drinking allowed in the Capitol, and read his immense black-letter books. But I fancy I shall have to do a good deal of walking, and inquiring, and asking of questions or what the elegant and accomplished Albany correspondent of The Tribune calls 'chin music.' I never leave the old rookery, even for a day, so much as a boy goes away from home, and with a good deal of the same feeling of regret. I know you will get along just as well without me, which is not at all consoling, but what is the use of living, if you can't be a bother to your friends." Friendliness like this made life very sunny in "the old rookery." It relieved the fatigue of writing, for example, all in one day, editorials on the salaries of government clerks in Washington, the fur and seal trade in the islands of St. Paul and St. George, and the revision of the Department of the Interior. Not forgetting, either, a little piece on salt! A certain variety was implicit in the job of "first writing editor."

Reid held that post until the summer of 1869, when trouble arising between the Associated Press and The

Tribune that involved Young, the latter resigned. Forthwith Greeley wrote with his own hand and posted in the editorial rooms what Reid described to Smalley, in London, as "a somewhat famous general order." It announced the acceptance of Young's resignation, and continued: "The office of managing editor is abolished, and Mr. Whitelaw Reid will see that Mr. Greeley's orders are obeyed, and give instructions at any time in his absence to subordinates." The news made a sensation in the journalistic world. No paper could get on, it was believed, without a managing editor, duly designated as such. Greeley, as usual, knew what he was about. The distinction vaguely but conclusively enough established in his order gave effect, for one thing, to a purpose which had all along been forming itself in his mind. This was to make Reid his second in command, with a wider scope than was perhaps compatible with too sharply defined a status. Writing to Smalley, Reid says: "For a week or so precisely what was meant by the order was a trifle uncertain to all of us. It soon became plain, however, that Mr. Greeley's object was simply to obviate the embarrassment of Mr. Young's departure by a nominal abolition of the office, the duties of which have still devolved upon me almost precisely as they had upon him. Mr. Greeley has instructed me to retain a general supervision of Foreign Correspondence as well as of all the other departments of the paper."

In giving the measure of his new responsibilities I may well begin with Smalley's reply, in which congratulations are strongly tempered by the writer's sense of the grave difficulties to be faced:

London,
June 25th, 1869.

My dear Reid:

If Young was to go I knew of course that you would succeed him, and the abolition of the office is only the abolition of a name. Mr. Greeley certainly will not give the time needed for management, and it was plain to me from the first—what you say became evident after a while—that Mr. Greeley's order was meant to smooth matters over for the time. I can't say that I congratulate you. I think I know pretty well what you succeed to—about the most difficult place in America, lots of enemies, secret and open, all around you, work enough for two men, and for general task set before you,—to accomplish the impossible. Nevertheless, though you and I have always been good friends, I should have done as Mr. Greeley has, put you into this purgatory, had it depended upon me. Mr. Greeley's old liking for you did not prevent him from doing it, and, now you are in, it will of course be invaluable to you.

I shall hold you to your promise of writing me letters to which your first shall seem short—at least I shall try to hold you, but I don't believe much in a managing editor's keeping any promise which is not in the way of business and for the good of his paper. Dana once defined to me a Managing Editor as a being to whom the sentiment of remorse was unknown. Don't prove him in the right.

Ever faithfully yours,

George W. Smalley.

The purgatorial hypothesis in this letter is a trifle overdone. There weren't "lots of enemies" dogging Reid's footsteps, nor did he have to accomplish the impossible. He had, undoubtedly, to do the work of two men, if not of three. But the only comment to be made upon that is that he enjoyed doing it. It is never really a hardship to have too much to do, when a man is placed in a position of importance, and left, on the whole, to use his own judgment in the administration of it

CHAPTER XI

AN EDITOR'S METHODS

Reid's ability to edit The Tribune, and Greeley's confidence in him, created a situation satisfactory to them both. For the older man it meant, especially, an enlargement of his liberty, with increased ease of mind. He was always going off on lecture tours. Now he could undertake them more freely, and even when in town he found it more comfortable to leave the management of the paper more and more in Reid's hands. Wherever he was, in Texas or in Brooklyn, he wrote constantly, brief communications which illustrate both his readiness to criticise and his almost touching dependence upon the man at the wheel. In the picture presented in their association one sees Greeley ranging hither and yon, or hovering, as it were, about the office, and Reid anchored there in an absorption broken only by dashes to catch hurried interviews with his chief. Some of Greeley's messages show how they met, or failed to meet. "I was over at the Astor House, but probably asleep when you called. If not hurried, please look me up tomorrow at 323 West 57th St. I may not be there, but the ride will do you good anyhow." And from a friend's house, on another occasion, he sends this: "Bring an evening paper. I live in outer darkness." There was no subject on earth on which he was unlikely to ask for light. It might be a matter of politics. Or with an editorial in hand that he was writing in his familiar character of the farmer's friend, he would suddenly demand rainfall statistics. Correspondents who bothered him were turned over to Reid, with some such tip as the following: "This fellow is the biggest humbug and nuisance in or out of Bohemia. Beware of him." Nor was he at all ambiguous in his reflections on Tribune men when their work irritated him. "I want to ascertain what reporter of a late Democratic Union Convention talked of that Convention going through the 'farce' of making up a ticket. Whoever doesn't know what is a reporter's business, and that it is not that of editing the paper—ought to find some other place." But the jewel amongst these domestic complaints is the one provoked by a troublesome though brilliant member of the staff: "Isn't it possible that I may indulge the cheering hope that —— will cease to inflict himself on the readers of The Tribune ere I die? I consider him a breeder of useless, unprofitable quarrels, and would like to see him abated." As in the fragments of some splintered mirror we arrest fleeting glimpses of the valiant old publicist's moods and opinions, his views on human nature as well as his policy on a current issue.

Hear him apropos of a political scandal long since gone down the wind: "I guess you are mistaken about the public interest in such wrangles. The multitude run instinctively to a dog fight, and I guess they relish a rasping of Seward by his jail bird. I know I do." Yet he had compunctions for that statesman, I may note in passing, as is shown in a note which also displays his editorial discretion. "Such paragraphs as that about Seward's late speeches are needless, and he will consider them malignant; therefore, let us have none of them. When we are constrained to fight his policy, let us do so, but never poke straws at him." The journalist pure and simple, the man of news, is, of course, always manifesting himself, alert for the making of a point. In the midst of the Tammany uproar he writes: "Believing that Tweed must soon run away or in some manner explode, I wish you to have ready for use the 'Sun's' gorgeous account of his daughter's diamond wedding early last summer. It can be made to point a moral." Tweed's accomplice, "Slippery Dick" Connolly, it will be remembered, was widely suspected of eloping tendencies as the Ring began to break up. Greeley anticipated the event in a note to Reid: "Epigram on Dick Connolly, when he clears out, as he must. The sheriff went for Dick—Dick cut and ran; so proved himself, for once, a *non est* man."

The great editor's little missives, fluttering in almost daily, consoled Reid for his labor in deciphering Greeley's unspeakable chirography. The light touches rewarded effort. He could be querulous sometimes, and, pouring in more leaders than could always be printed "on the nail," he would forget his own philosophy on the making up of a day's page, which was to make it up in its own interests, regardless of anybody's private feelings. "Please don't let us be crowded off the editorial page," is one of his most frequent admonitions. Delay in the publication of an article of his made him wrathy. If it was due, as in one historic instance, to the intervention of some stuff about city real estate, the welkin rang. "I won't stand it," he exclaims, on the verge of hurling a veritable thunderbolt. But mostly he kept to the vein of this delectable example:

New York,
February 27th, 1871.

REID:

Don't you remember Artemus Ward thought a joke once a month in a comic paper might not be out of place? If you do, get me in some editorials. You gave me no show this morning. . . .

Have something about peace. You can't guess how my gorge rises at all you have printed in deprecation of the Germans entering Paris. I think the French objections to it base and paltry. If ever men won a right to march through a city the Germans have that right to go through Paris, and it is babyish to object to it. Bah!

Yours,
H. G.

The full-dress editorials in which he liberated his largest, most dynamic ideas, are hardly more characteristic of Greeley than these casual outflingings from his pen. In the latter we get, at all events, the very accent of his daily familiar speech, the speech of the man as well as of the editor, of the Greeley between whom and Reid there developed not only so strong a professional tie but so deep an affection. He was not always talking shop. "If there be places at the Opera tomorrow, remember yours, H. G.," runs one of the notes, and there were countless occasions on which the hardened politician forgot all about politics. That "old liking" of his for Reid, to which we have seen Smalley referring, was a matter of sympathy and trust. He perfectly understood the unanswerable editorial reasons for those delays attending his own articles, from time to time, on which he was accustomed to be so seemingly annoyed, and the last fragment I shall here quote from him is perhaps the most representative of them all: "Do your best, and lose no sleep because of grumblers." In the original memoranda made for the sketch of his chief which Reid prepared for the "Cyclopædia of American Biography," I find certain of Greeley's gentler traits particularly underlined for notice. One of these was his love of poetry, evinced, by the way, with striking critical prescience. Greeley was one of the earliest of Swinburne's appreciative readers. Reid mentions also his quickness amongst American editors to recognize the rising genius of Dickens, and his discovery of Bret Harte's merits before others in the East were awake to them. Passing from purely literary matters he refers with emphasis to his friend's "quaint ways and dry humour." These, above all, were of immeasurable solace to Reid in the difficult and strenuous period of his first years on The Tribune.

A letter of his own will best serve to disclose his attitude toward Greeley and the manner in which he filled Greeley's place, when circumstances required it, behind the scenes in New York political journalism. It was written in the course of the Tammany exposures, when Tweed's mayor, Oakey Hall, was doing his best to withstand the Fates, and Tilden—with visions of the presidential nomination floating before him—was watching for the psychological moment at which to take a hand in the smashing of the Ring and come forth as the savior of his party.

New York,
September 18th, 1871.

My dear Mr. Greeley:

I need not say that personally I shall be more than glad of your return whenever you feel that you can come. I am always sorry when you leave and delighted when you get within consulting distance. I am willing to do any amount of work and would gladly relieve you of four-fifths of that which harasses you when here, but I feel more comfortable when once in 24 or 48 hours I can go to you for advice and counsel.

I had a long talk with Tilden last night. He is backed up by O'Connor, and I suspect by Tweed, although he denies it. He means to cut the Tammany Ring adrift, and if possible save the party, but I suspect a closer affiliation than we would like with O'Brien and the Custom House crowd. On the other hand, when at the outset he enquired whether I was as much opposed to Gen. Grant as he knew you to be, and on my replying that I rather thought so, he said, "Very well then, our interests are not adverse."

The excitement in political circles in consequence of the extraordinary proceedings at the City Hall is greater than anything I have ever seen in New York. We were miles ahead this morning both in our news, interviews with Tilden, Havemeyer, etc., and in our editorial comments, dealing in two articles with the various phases of the question brought up by Hall's attempt to checkmate Tilden, all written after half past one o'clock and on the presses at half past two. The other papers were almost utterly without comment, Hall having evidently delayed the correspondence till the last moment in the hope of getting 24 hours start of any comment that could be made. We have flanked him this way once before and the matter causes a great deal of talk and wonderment among newspaper men in town. It was done by being ready the instant the news came in and dividing the work, Hay taking one half and I the other.

Always faithfully yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

The sentence at the end is eloquent of an important factor in Reid's management. If Greeley gave him precious support and companionship, so likewise did all the members of the staff. Exploring old files and letter-books, I have found voluminous evidences of the understanding existing between Reid and his men, and especially of the enthusiasm with which they all worked together in the common cause. On his first absence for rest a telegram of Hassard's told him at Cedarville how his orders were being carried out. "Tuesday's Tribune is pronounced by H. G. the most perfect daily paper ever printed. Greeley and Sinclair [the business manager] both boiling over with delight. Every other paper beaten out of sight. Expect equal success tomorrow." He had a priceless coadjutor in John R. G. Hassard, a man who could do anything and was of a very lovable character. If Reid was away he could trust Hassard implicitly to "managing edit" with flawless judgment. His leaders were of the best. When Ripley, the veteran literary editor of the paper, went abroad for a year in 1869, it was Hassard who quite naturally took his place, and down to the day of his death he was one of The Tribune's most dependable reviewers of books. From 1867 to 1883 he was also the musical editor, exercising in that capacity a knowledge, a taste, and a style which left their mark upon American criticism in this department of art. He commemorated in The Tribune the initial performance of Wagner's "Nibelungen" tetralogy at Bayreuth, giving to this country the first authoritative account of the composer's momentous enterprise. Hassard it was, too, who later solved the famous Tilden cipher despatches, simultaneously with Colonel William M. Grosvenor, for many years a writer on financial and kindred topics in The Tribune. Reid could not have had a more resourceful or more loyal "right-hand man."

If it was upon the high abilities of his subordinates that he chiefly counted, there was hardly less strength and cheer to be got out of their friendship and their abounding cleverness, their gay humor, their way of prosecuting the day's work with equal skill and spirit. There is a story of Hugo's "La Légende des Siècles" arriving at the office just in time to be placed in Bayard Taylor's hands that evening. Twenty-four hours later The Tribune's compositors were putting into type the exhaustive review in which he embodied translations of five of the poems, versions which still endure. It brought peace to an editor's soul to have such a critic to rely upon, and it gave him another joy when on another occasion he found Taylor striding up and down the editorial rooms, rapturously reciting the "Jabberwocky." When Fechter paid his first visit to America and controversy waxed hot over his Hamlet, there was a prodigious amount of log-rolling done in his interest, and some of it was directed at Reid. He backed up William Winter in the latter's caustic criticism of the actor, and ended by getting immense amusement out of the episode. "He is a diluted Gustave Doré sort of an artist—all India ink and gamboge," wrote Winter, and in that vein of merry satire they withstood together the campaign of the Fechterites. Typical of the blithe terms on which he lived with his staff is this note from inimitable, mischievous, convivial Charles T. Congdon, gracefulest of writers on "miscellaneous" topics, moody, improvident, and sublimely resilient:

Lynn, April 12th.

Dear W. R.:

Please employ some trustworthy person to redeem this raiment from the Israelite; and send it to me, express paid. Draw funds enough of mine to satisfy the vampyres, and then let the transaction pass into oblivion!

I am ratherish out of sorts, but with a plan of changing my quarters to a village within five miles of "the spot where I was born," and where your confounded brethren, Her Majesty's Sixtieth Regiment of Infantry, burned my great grandfather's ware-houses, and frightened my grandmother, a mere slip of a girl, out of her young senses. I know that it was the 60th Regiment, for we shot one of them, and when I was in long clothes I had his buttons to play with, d—— him.

Faithfully yours,
C. T. CONGDON.

There was plenty of "temperament" to be dealt with. Here is a sprightly specimen of it as exhibited by the poet, Richard Henry Stoddard:

Friday Evening.

MY DEAR REID:

Of all the damned, infernal pieces of work that a white man ever undertook to do, reporting a book sale intelligently is about the worst. Three hours under the gas light, for three nights in succession! "Get thee behind me, Satan."

STODDARD.

Mark Twain, a not infrequent contributor, and a warm friend of Reid's, was another man certain to add to the day's entertainment. He was just coming into view as author and lecturer when they first became acquainted, and the humorist's notes often relate to his affairs and his friend's careful interest in them. "I thank you heartily for saving me that gratuitous snub in The Tribune, and shall be glad to choke a slur for you if I ever get a chance. I guess this emanated from some bummer who owes me borrowed money and can't forgive the offence. Yours ever, Mark." Again he asks for the announcement of a new lecture—"it covers my whole acquaintance, kings, humorists, lunatics, idiots and all"—and again it is his "Innocents Abroad" for which he craves a helpful word. "Today," he writes, "my new book will be sent to The Tribune and this is to ask you if you won't get your reviewer to praise the bad passages and feeble places in it for me. They are the only ones I am worrying about, you know—the meritorious parts can get along themselves, of course."

It is not only for the sparks of fun that may be left in them that I quote these old strays from an editor's correspondence. Their spirit, their atmosphere of good comradeship, is of more importance than that, helping us to realize what manner of man Reid was when he was called to manage the greatest American newspaper of his time and how he contrived to get the best out of his brilliant men, inside and outside the office. He did it by force of character. He was never a demonstrative man and strangers sometimes thought Greeley's other self too reserved, too proud. He had, as a matter of fact, that defensive pride which Johnson claimed when he was accused of matching arrogance with arrogance in his quarrel with Lord Chesterfield. He had barriers up against no man—until some one menaced his self-respect. In the administration of his office he maintained discipline, but if his men worked for him with splendid zeal it was because he combined strictness with kindness. The staff were his friends. No detail in the make-up of the day's paper was too minute for his attention. For years it had been Ripley's function to see that the author of the faintest hint of slang or bad English was duly immersed in boiling oil. Reid took over that responsibility also and stirred the caldron well for the man whose grammar limped. He preserved an almost military rule. But he wore the velvet glove. His reprimands left no hard feeling. They were just and they were considerately administered. He governed by good-will and generosity, and I could fill pages with instances of his helpfulness in counsel, his goodness and delicacy in times of illness and sorrow.

Salaries were never high anywhere in the sixties and seventies. Reid's readiness to raise them when he could, and the singularly friendly notes he had a way of writing when he did so, bound the staff to him with another strand of loyalty. He was wont to remind a man that he had done some exceptional piece of work, in a special crisis, by writing him a letter of appreciation, and enclosing a check. "Be assured," writes one such recipient, "that I deeply appreciate your goodness, and shall always remember it. I thank you for the bit of money, but I thank you a hundred times more for the considerate courtesy and good feeling which prompted you to send it." Another member of the staff, thanking him for a similar action, says: "I am still better pleased with the strong expression of your personal friendship." I need not enlarge upon the subject, but neither would I omit it. It is well to remember that the leadership which bore The Tribune on to new triumph and prosperity was that of the heart as well as the head. He won loyalty because he gave it. One of the prettiest testimonies to this is Winter's, written in the midst of the Fechter business, when all manner of vain stratagems were employed to cause Reid to restrain his critic: "This I say with all my heart, that I honor, and always shall honor, the firm, unwavering integrity and justice with which you have sustained me in the performance of my duty." He was always like that.

It has been one of the complaints levelled against Amercan journalism, that it has sometimes been too complaisant toward external influences, especially those manifesting themselves through the advertising columns. I have known an advertiser to threaten the cancellation of a large contract unless an adverse criticism was repudiated. Reid's answer was to instruct his critic to return at once to the charge, with redoubled energy. He was equally impervious to the purely personal considerations which are frequently forced upon an editor. Authors, painters, workers in any of the fields of art, who fancied that the best way to obtain "a favorable notice" was to solicit his intervention, were ludicrously disillusioned. It was not the glowing letter of introduction from a friend that counted, it was the work itself, which was left to the critic, for him to test upon its merits. With the upshot of that process—having once given his confidence to the critic—Reid resolutely refused to have anything to do. This was primarily a matter of principle. His refusal to interfere with a subordinate's intellectual operations was also an expression of his ideas on newspaper technic. He wanted good workmanship. For that, he knew, the good workman must have freedom. His supervision of that freedom told only in ways that heightened its value, not in modifying what a man had to say, but in bettering his way of saying it. He was an inflexible hater of redundancy, and I recall a pithy saying of his: "The reader never misses what is not there." There never was an editor quite like him with a blue pencil, so swift to see where an article could profitably be cut, or so skilled in the art which Mr. Howells once described to me as the art of "joining the bleeding parts." Reid knew what he wanted journalistic writing to be—clear, direct, interesting—and he knew how to develop it in his staff. It was for this reason, and because of that fine standard of disinterestedness I have just alluded to, that under him, as under Greeley, access to the columns of The Tribune was "a patent of literary nobility."

The number of writers, then or afterward famous, to whom the paper thus appealed, was rapidly increased as he developed his policy of strengthening the staff. Bret Harte, Henry James, Isaac Bromley, Rebecca Harding Davis, Arsène Houssaye, Bronson Howard, Emily Crawford—a positive host comes into view as one traverses the record. But I pause now upon only a single member of that host, the writer amongst all his earlier acquisitions whom Reid regarded as perhaps his luckiest find. This was John Hay. In view of his subsequent career as diplomat and secretary of state, and of their long friendship, productive of many episodes to which we shall return, it is especially interesting to exhibit the manner in which Reid gave him his first serious opportunity as a writer for the daily press.

Hay quitted his diplomatic post in Spain, where he was first secretary of legation at Madrid, in the summer of 1870, and returned to America in September with plans for joining Nicolay, who had taken the editorship of the "Republican," the paper which Dana had started in Chicago. He saw Reid in New York. Reviving memories of their days in Washington, when one was in the White House and the other was in the press gallery, they drifted into the subject of Hay's future. He had already some irons in the fire. There was the possibility of work with Nicolay and he had received some overtures from the "Times" in New York. At the moment of his meeting with Reid there was talk in The Tribune office of changing the Paris correspondent of the paper, and when they parted, his projects still in a nebulous state, Hay kept this fact in mind. He went on to Chicago, and presently wrote to Reid that he had not found there the elements of stability he expected. Nicolay was doing his best, but he was making a losing fight against inexorable figures. Hay then proceeded to glance at the possibilities of Paris. He was not unwilling to go there as The Tribune's representative, and wondered what the wage would be. The idea of Hay, launched and perhaps kept going indefinitely as a newspaper man in Paris, intrigues the fancy. How superbly well he would have done the work—and how different a number of other things would have been! The decision was in Reid's hands. He was always a stanch friend of Hay, true in affection and in service, but I don't suppose he was ever kinder, or exercised a more telling influence upon Hay's life, than when he replied to him in this fashion:

New York,
September 21st, 1870.

My dear Mr. Hay:

I am sorry to hear the ill news about Nicolay. It has also reached me from other sources and has indeed a more serious look than I at first supposed; nothing less, it appears, than the suspension of the paper has seemed to be impending.

Many thanks for the suggestion about the Paris place. Matters are still a little uncertain but within a month I shall want to decide definitely and shall think of you first. I would rather indeed have you come to New York, and if you were not a fellow of such diplomatically extravagant habits as to be beyond the reach of our modest salaries I should try to tempt you. We have been paying Cook $1000 a year in gold for a weekly letter. When I directed him to write more frequently I promised him, I think, $20 per letter in gold. If you should go there for us I think I could make the terms one half better, possibly even more, though of the last I am doubtful. I should quite like to have you there on many accounts, though if you will permit me the freedom of saying so, I doubt whether it would be really so good for you, in case you have definitely determined on journalism, as steady work here or in some large city on a leading newspaper and on the magazines. A pleasant note from Howells on another matter makes cordial mention of you.

Faithfully yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

This was precisely the letter that Hay needed. The Paris place was not refused and his ambition was stirred in the right direction. He took Reid's advice, which was the more welcome because, as he now wrote from Chicago, the "Republican" was hopelessly water-logged. He journeyed back to New York, accepted a post on the editorial staff of The Tribune, groomed himself for the work by studying the files for the preceding three or four years, and with his characteristic aplomb soon fitted himself into his niche. Reid appointed him without consulting Greeley. The latter, in fact, had never thought well of Hay since his action at the so-called Niagara Falls Peace Conference. When, within two or three weeks after the appointment, he heard of it, he said it was a mistake, and assured Reid that it could not last long. Shortly afterward he asked who had written an editorial which he particularly admired, and when told that Hay was the author he could hardly believe it. A little later he picked out another editorial for praise, and, on learning that it was also written by the man whose failure he had predicted, he broke out into a generous encomium.

I have taken these notes on Hay's joining the staff from a reminiscence of Reid's. In it he also recalls the facts relating to his friend's early poems. The first of them to be printed was "Little Breeches." Hay handed it to Reid over the table when they were dining together one evening at the Union League Club, and seemed surprised when, after reading it, Reid put it in his pocket, saying that he should print it conspicuously in a day or two in The Tribune. He shook his head incredulously and said: "You wouldn't dare to." It was duly printed, and the evening of the day of its appearance, riding up-town in a horse-car, Hay had the satisfaction of seeing a man whom he did not know take it out of his pocket and read it to a neighbor on the car, and then found that several others on the car had also read it, and were talking about it. Within a week or two he wrote the next of the series, "Jim Bludso," but Reid handed it back, observing that the last stanza wasn't worthy of the rest of it, and that a far more effective ending could be made. Hay wrote another, which Reid handed back again, a day or two later, saying it could still be improved upon and suggesting that the poem ought to be wound up with a sort of epigrammatic snap. The third version, finished the next day or the day after, is the one which then appeared in

The Tribune and made an instantaneous success, there and throughout the country. The manuscript, with Hay's original ending of the poem and a note in his handwriting at the bottom, explaining the change, Reid had bound into his copy of the first edition. Hay was not as pleased with his triumph as might have been expected. He thought a good deal more of his book on Spain, and it became a positive torture to him to be constantly referred to, not as the author of "Castilian Days," but as the author of the "Pike County Ballads." Frequently, in after years, when he and Reid met, he would ask: "Shall I never be able to shake off the cursed reputation of those youthful follies?"

Apart from his verses, Hay rarely strayed from the editorial page. Once he did so, on a lurid occasion. Reid sent him to "clean up" the news of the Chicago fire. But that was his sole reportorial excursion. His regular function was to comment on public affairs. He was a good writer, and, after Reid's heart, a hard hitter, with an inestimably deft touch. One of the legends long surviving in The Tribune office describes him as rising gleefully from a leader on European politics and exclaiming: "I've been taking another hack at them kings. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth in royal palaces to-morrow." He particularly excelled in the castigation of Napoleon III, for whom he cherished an unquenchable loathing. He used to tell, also, of an editorial he had written on Gustave Doré, so ferocious in its candor that he was a little surprised at its getting past Reid's critical eye. Reid was of great service to him in the development of his gifts as a writer. There was a difference of but one year between their ages, but Reid's rich professional experience made him a monitor no less respected than Greeley himself. Their friend John Bigelow wrote to Reid from Berlin: "The only thing about which Hay and I ever differed seriously, I believe, was in regard to the availability of his talents for journalism. I expect now to have my opinion vindicated. You must not work Hay too hard at first, but leave him pretty much to the perverse impulses of his naturally depraved nature. He will not abuse your forbearance, but in that way his genius will find the most convenient door through which to communicate with The Tribune's world." Reid's tutelage was immediately successful. "I have never seen a more brilliant beginning," he replied to Bigelow, "and it is an immense comfort to have him with me." And in another letter: "His only danger is from a desire to do too much, against which I constantly warn him. He doesn't ring the bell every time—no marksman can—but I know no writer on any newspaper in the country who displays greater versatility and in the main writes more charmingly." It is pleasant to cite with reference to Hay one of those surprise letters which, as I have already shown, Reid liked to indite:

New York,
December 3rd, 1870.

My dear Hay:

I have a fancy that hereafter your Saturday cheques will have a look more satisfactory to us if we have on them the figures 65 instead of 50, and have directed that little arithmetical emendation. Your work thus far has been exceedingly valuable, and I have seen now enough of your capacity in sudden emergencies and in a wide scope to be ready to repeat the assurance which I gave you at the beginning, that journalism is sure to prove your true field. More familiarity with Tribune ways and dropped or unknown links in New York politics, will soon make you still more valuable, and I hope that so long as I remain on The Tribune, at least, you will add to my comfort as well as strength by feeling it to be your home also. With the heartiest good wishes, I am always,

Faithfully yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

This was part of a holiday treat. Eight other letters of similar import were sent out to Tribune men that day. But Hay's came first, and, I think, meant most to Reid, for in a few weeks of New York intercourse the two had come to know one another better than in the Washington days back in 1862. They were together in the office and out of it. At the end of the afternoon's work they used to walk up-town to the Italian restaurant on Third Avenue, above Cooper Institute, known as The Brigands, where they often dined. They met in society, at the clubs, at the theatre, everywhere. Notes like the following would be dropped on Reid's desk:

> We ought to see the Black Crook before it stops. Send the boy for two tickets (good ones) and we will dine together *chez le Frenchy* and go.
>
> Hay.

And sometimes the buoyant young leader writer would play truant, disarming his mentor after this fashion:

> Farewell, I hear a voice you cannot see. It is at Newburgh. I will meet you at the Century tomorrow at a ghastly late hour, very drunk. For tonight the G. M. O. [the Great Moral Organ] will worry along without
>
> J. H.

Decidedly there was comfort and strength in the aid and companionship of the future secretary of state, all youthful high spirits, jokes and fun. And there were similarly helpful friends outside the office—George William Curtis, letting him know that his brother was going out to Des Moines to photograph an eclipse and could give him a good report; Samuel J. Tilden, personally interesting himself in a matter of legal documents to be furnished to the press, and calling to explain an unfortunate delay in one notable case; and, in Boston, the younger Charles Francis Adams. The last-mentioned was no lover of the newspapers of his own city. Sending an editorial on the subject, he writes: "The present condition of the Boston press is a disgrace to journalism and I want to make them feel it. A great raid is going on upon the State treasury and every single paper in this city is either in the pay or under the influence of the raiders." The Tribune was his hope and reliance in all serious matters. "It does not do to fire one's heaviest guns every day, and The Tribune I keep, as it were, a peculiarly heavy cudgel against an emergency." He was a frequent contributor on railway subjects, but balked at tackling some others:

Boston,
February 24th, 1871.

DEAR SIR:

Yours of the 22nd came to hand this A.M. and rather took away my breath. I'm not aware of knowing anything more about the Alabama Claims than about Chinese metaphysics;—if you like I'll read up in the Encyclopaedia under the several heads of "Alabama" and "Claims" and combine my information. I'm much obliged for the chance but there really are bounds to my impudence.

Yours truly,
C. F. ADAMS, JR.

It was no use assuming that, because of the elder Adams's diplomatic relation in London to the events of the Civil War, his son might fairly be expected to have some inspiration on the subject. "Really," he remarks, in another letter, "who was Alabama? and what did he claim?"

CHAPTER XII

THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR

Delane, of the London "Times," had a humorous designation for the routine process of instructing his staff as to what was needed for the next issue. He called it "feeding his ravens." Reid had a flock to feed not only at home but abroad. Smalley, doing great work himself in London, was also in general charge of a small but efficient Continental force. In Paris he relied upon William H. Huntington, whom Reid once described to me as "wayward, fascinating, and brilliant." He was so clever that Reid was well content to bear the trouble of having his letters "translated from Carlylese into English." About the time of Reid's accession to the managing editorship Huntington was succeeded by Clarence Cook, previously and at a later date the art critic of the paper, but in due course he was restored to his post. Hay thought him the right man for the place even when he wanted it himself. Joseph L. Hance, secretary of legation under Bancroft at Berlin, wrote from that capital, M. Chamerauzan from Spain, Mr. W. J. Stillman from Greece, and Madame Mario—in close relations with Garibaldi—from Italy. More or less regular connections with Constantinople and Vienna were kept up, and the paper had some representation in St. Petersburg.

News came from all these sources, light on current incidents, but Reid, who kept the whole field in view, and, through Smalley, was constantly spurring his correspondents to fresh effort, was particularly concerned with the play of European ideas. It was a happy period for the foreign emissary of an American newspaper. He would write not only reports but studies, and since he used the leisurely mails he could take time to give his lucubrations a literary polish. Comment, when it rose to a certain plane, was quite as important as news. The kind of thing that was swept into Smalley's net is well exemplified here:

London,
June 25th, 1870.

My dear Reid:

You know Tourgenieff as a very famous Russian novelist whose novels are always translated into French, etc. Our Russian correspondent, who has the remarkable peculiarity of knowing Russian well, sends me this translation of T's account of the last night and execution of Troppmann, just published in St. Petersburg. A German translation will appear in July at Berlin. It is, says our correspondent, the strongest kind of an indirect argument against capital punishment, and, as such, good Tribune matter.

Faithfully yours,
George W. Smalley.

Good Tribune matter was always drifting in from Europe in this way. Much of it was casual, started upon its path by the fame of the paper and the instinct of writers for a good vehicle. More of it was the fruit of foresight and organization. This proved emphatically the case when, with Smalley's stalwart co-operation, Reid brought off his first great *coup* in The Tribune, the publication of reports of the Franco-Prussian War—and especially of Sedan—in advance of all his contemporaries, using the cable as it had never before been used for the transmission of news. As Smalley has recorded in his "Anglo-American Memories," this worked nothing less than a revolution in journalism. To a contributor at home Reid once stated his requirements in an epigram which I fancy no other editorial master of news has ever improved upon: "Matter for a paper like The Tribune generally consists of things which could not have been printed yesterday and must be printed tomorrow."

That was the standard which he resolved to maintain in the paper's treatment of the war in Europe, an undertaking in which the energy he had displayed at Shiloh and Gettysburg was reinforced by the consciousness of having far better practical resources at his command.

Dana had had the glittering inspiration to engage "Bull Run" Russell, and though, as events proved, The Tribune was comfortably to beat the London "Times," the announcement of this alliance was at the moment disconcerting. The "Herald," too, caused him some nervousness. His first step was to cable instructions to Smalley, bidding him to arrange at once for full despatches from London, Paris, and Berlin. He took pains at the same time to see Cyrus Field, making sure that the machinery in the telegraph-office would be adjusted to the smoothest and swiftest possible handling of Tribune business, and then he followed up his messages to Smalley with this letter:

New York,
July 20th, 1870.

My dear Smalley:

I think it desirable that we should be represented by first class correspondents with both armies, and that in case of any necessity for these correspondents to leave with accounts of battles or the like we should be prepared promptly to fill their places or to give them as much aid as they may require. I am by no means certain that it is good policy either for The Tribune or for you that you should be retained in London discharging functions which after the first organization is complete cannot amount to very much more than those of a telegraphic agent. On this point, however, I am disposed for the present to defer largely to your judgment. If we had you in the field I should be willing to put your letters and despatches against those of Russell. Possibly if you have thoroughly good men for the two armies we may still be able to beat the "Sun," though I shall feel less confidence about it.

We have had something like forty or fifty applications here within the last four days from young men generally without reputation or capacity to go abroad as war correspondents. I have declined all of them, but may possibly send one or two with letters to you during the ensuing week.

For the next two months, if the war should last so long, remember that we look to you to keep us ahead of any other paper in New York on war news, and place no limitation upon your expenditures save that in case they should seem likely to reach extraordinary amounts you should keep us regularly and early advised of them.

I see that you, like the rest of us here, are pursued by the gnats. Here is one which has just come in to me from the Boston "Post." If you saw all the New York papers you would learn that your character as here shown is that of an angel of light compared with the unfortunate presentment of

Faithfully yours, Whitelaw Reid.

P. S.

Since the above was written I have heard some things which make me more than ever anxious about our despatches. Thus far the "Herald" has had practically nothing, but I am inclined to suspect that they are lying back for a grand *coup*. The first battle will doubtless be the occasion for the sharpest competition. If we can make a hit on that it will be of incalculable advantage to us, both for the actual news and as an advertisement. If we can give a complete account of the first battle in advance of everybody else we shall make The Tribune the recognized authority on foreign news. But with the "Herald" lies our greatest danger. If they see a chance to get ahead they will willingly spend $50,000. in doing it.

If you look closely at Dana's correspondence with Russell, which I enclose, you may perhaps put a different interpretation upon it from that which I at first gave it. It looks to me as if he had punctuated it wrong and purposely. Russell's answer may be read in this way—"I will save you if I go to the field." At any rate I have very little fear of his doing anything to embarrass us. Russell's strong point never was the collection of news, nor do I believe that in a telegraphic despatch he can display any of the excellences as a descriptive writer to which his whole reputation is due.

His surmise came true. There must always have been a special relish for him in the oft-quoted passage from "Friendship's Garland" in which Arnold paid his compliments to Russell at Versailles: "Bismarck at his horse's head, the Crown Prince holding his stirrup, and the old King of Prussia hoisting Russell into the saddle." It was a perfectly lovely picture—but only a pretty pendant to the cold, hard fact that the "Times" man confirmed Reid's belief that he would not, after all, "do anything to embarrass us." Smalley played up in a manner worthy of his record at Antietam. He faced enormous difficulties and lived in a fever of anxiety lest his correspondents should fail him. "The greatest misery in this world," he wailed, "is having to depend on other men." But he was heartened by the confidence breathing through the incessantly cabled orders of his chief, and with extraordinary rapidity he got a staff into the field. Holt White, formerly of the "Pall Mall Gazette," with no pass but trusting adventurously to luck, headed for Metz, with orders to follow the army. He got a letter through to Smalley within a few days. Chamerauzan looked after the situation in Paris. A member of the staff of "Figaro," who was going as an officer in the army to Cherbourg, was half promised as a contributor. Another foreigner ("his name was Dennis, and we'll let it stay so"), started to join Bazaine's staff, but, for reasons of his own, failed to get there. "From a private source not mentionable," Smalley reported, "I have promise of letters direct from French Headquarters, exclusive for us. For these I have offered so high a price that I have some faith in their coming." On the German side, Hance, The Tribune's regular Berlin man, was to go with Prussian Headquarters; he had orders to engage a second correspondent before he left, and from this side, also, there promised to come occasional despatches from Sir Charles Dilke. Other engagements were soon made, and on top of them all Smalley arranged with the London "Daily News" an interchange of all war news, a scheme which would seem commonplace to-day, but which was then promoted only by heroic effort. It doubled The Tribune's chances of being ahead of its New York rivals in great events, and as the effects of the partnership developed they amply proved the wisdom of the plan. On the other hand, it was always a matter of pride with Reid and Smalley that the initiative was The Tribune's, and that their own men were responsible for the greatest achievements in the campaign. It was American energy and foresight that turned this war into a landmark in the history of newspaper correspondence.

The Tribune's men at the front had instructions to send their reports to London by telegraph; when that was not possible they were to use special couriers, and in the case of a great battle they were to come straight to England themselves. A man was sent to Luxembourg to organize facilities there for the transmission of despatches by wire. Smalley waited with agonizing impatience for tidings wherewith to load the cable to New York. "It is roasting on a slow fire," he wrote to Reid. But the first actions of the war were adequately and even sensationally covered. The despatch on Spicheren which Holt White telegraphed—about a column in length—was so remarkable as coming by that process that the "Daily News" had to be shown the telegraph forms before they could quite believe in it. With Gravelotte The Tribune completely astounded the journalistic sceptics. Smalley's letter must tell the story:

London,
August 25th, 1870.

My dear Reid:

The account of Gravelotte telegraphed you 23rd and about which you ask was written by a correspondent present on the field, and who came straight to London, and when he reached London was certainly the only man in England who had seen that fight. He wrote his account here, in the "Daily News" office. I sat beside him, took his slips as fast as written, copying and in the last half considerably rewriting and extending his letter—not going outside his facts, of course. It will not do to say—at any rate yet—even to you, who was the author, nor dare I explain the circumstances which put you in possession of the account. When the excitement has a little died away, I may be able to tell you the history of this coup.* All I can say now is that it cost a lot of money. The additional particulars sent you same day were from Hance, and it was he who was captured by the French, and really had a rough time of it and was unable either to get his letter through so promptly as he would have done. The account first telegraphed you (Sunday night, August 22nd,) was White's, by telegraph from Saarbruck. And his long account, which he unaccountably trusted to the post, arrived in pieces yesterday and today. It is better in many respects than any other, more precise and military by far than the long one I telegraphed you but less picturesque. Judge our difficulties and successes by the fact that this delayed account is the fullest —and excepting one brief letter in "Pall Mall Gazette"—the only one even yet received in London, excepting also of course what has been telegraphed you and printed following days in "Daily News."

The "Daily News" has beaten every London journal out of sight. I won't say how much of their success is due to us, but they frankly acknowledge the full extent of their obligation. That the arrangement has been helpful to us you already know. Our telegrams from Saarbruck and Luxembourg made far more impression than the detailed account, because they were telegrams.

Faithfully yours,

George W. Smalley.

There was good reading for Smalley in the London papers at that time. The "Spectator," commenting on White's telegram from Saarbruck, remarked: "The correspondent stood near the King and was worthy of his good fortune. No more effective bird's eye view of a great battle was probably ever written by a civilian, as we take the correspondent to be." This telegram, as disclosed by Smalley's letter and by the files of The Tribune, was only one of several communications on Gravelotte to the paper. The fulness as well as the swiftness of the work done told heavily in its resounding success. But the rather complicated nature of that work, the diverse authorship involved, and, as we have seen, the little mystery enveloping one of the despatches, all made it a little easier for the inevitable commentator to arise in due course for the purpose of restating the history of the affair. Some ten years later it seemed worth while for The Tribune to affirm once more the priority of its news from Gravelotte. It is interesting to record that the editorial in which it did so, on December 19th, 1880, was written by Archibald Forbes, then on a lecture tour in the United States. He had views on the journalistic aspects of the Franco-Prussian War, and erroneous ideas on certain matters of fact, which led Smalley to the making of some tart comments when the noted correspondent published his "Memories," but he was both sound and sympathetic in his conception of The Tribune's famous *coup*. He had himself witnessed the battle and knew his ground. I need not cite his article, for its details are no longer necessary, but I may borrow a few words from the covering letter he wrote to Reid: "The little question about the priority of the Gravelotte despatch afforded a point on which The Tribune has the plainest grounds and the strongest provocation to assert itself directly in defence of its character for promptitude in war news. You have the fairest opportunity for a little legitimate swagger on this point without being unduly aggressive, seeing that plain facts are on your side. I have taken the pains to write a little article embodying the facts." The facts leave the paper with its glory undimmed.

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*The late Moncure D. Conway was the author.

The war was so short that Smalley had really very little of that roasting on a slow fire against which he raged. *Coup* followed *coup*, with ineffable speed. The excitement of Gravelotte had hardly died down when he sent a despatch to Reid giving warning of the transcendent exploit of the campaign. "Correspondent will arrive London this evening," it ran, "with account battle of Sedan. Shall I telegraph tonight or hold back for Monday's paper?" Imagine Reid's holding back! Smalley has in a book of his own told how the despatch was written and put instantly on the cable. I shall not attempt to summarize his dramatic narrative. More to the purpose, indeed, is his report to his chief, which gives, if anything, a fresher because more immediate impression. He wrote:

London,
September 8th, 1870.

My dear Reid:

I was very much gratified by your despatch received this morning, sending your congratulations and thanks and those of The Tribune on our successes. A great share of your recognition belongs to two or three men by whom we have been so splendidly served. The account of Sedan telegraphed Saturday night was by Holt White. He left the field against the remonstrances of his friends on the Prussian staff, and rode across country at the risk of his life through three armies, (Prussian, remnants of the French, disorganized and more dangerous than all, and the Belgians who guarded the frontier) travelled night and day, and reached London 5 P.M. Saturday, only a few hours later than the official telegraphic news of surrender, which was the first, half starved and exhausted. I took him to dine, then set him down to his work here in the office, sending every 6 or 8 sheets to the telegraph, 3 miles from here, and he finished at half past three Sunday morning. To facilitate transmission I copied the whole, sheet by sheet, the clerks being so used to my writing that in a long despatch they reckon it makes 2 or 3 hours difference in getting it off. Part of this he gave to the "Pall Mall Gazette" for Monday afternoon, he being formerly, in Paris, and still partly now, their man. Nothing else was printed in London (as I could not give this to the "Daily News") till Tuesday morning.

The French account telegraphed you Tuesday was by Mejanel, about whom I have before written you. He stuck to Mac Mahon after every other correspondent had been driven off, and after being shut up in Sedan got away, got a Prussian endorsement on his French pass, and came straight to London. The "Daily News" printed simultaneously with you. Nothing else from the French side even yet.

The detailed account sent Monday night of interview between Emperor and Bismarck was Skinner's, "Daily News." The Bismarck conversation sent Sunday night and the battle of Beaumont with it were White's. White and Mejanel were our own men.

I should not be sorry if the war ended here. The last week has been hardest of all. I have not been home once, and for three successive nights was not in bed. The siege of Paris will make it more difficult than ever to get news through. I have couriers waiting both here and there and until the investment is absolutely complete shall hope to get letters through after the mail and wires are done.

Faithfully yours,
GEORGE W. SMALLEY.

How complete the triumph of The Tribune was appears from a later letter of Smalley's exposing the falsity of certain despatches in one of the rival papers, and casting the same aspersions upon another. The particular forgery to which he addressed himself was one relating to the capitulation of Metz. He says of it:

London,
November 15th, 1870.

MY DEAR REID:

This instance is the worst because Metz was a great point, and there has been nothing done for us more promptly than our account. The surrender took place Saturday afternoon, our correspondent, Muller, spent the afternoon in the town—it was a great feat to get in—got to Esch, in Luxembourg, early Sunday morning, and Monday morning his despatch was printed in The Tribune, which ought to have the credit of it. Nothing in London has made so much sensation as our despatch in the "News," which the "Times" copied next day, and which was three days ahead of everything else. I think it deserves to rank with Gravelotte and Sedan, and beats both in promptitude. It might have been longer but Muller is a new hand and was nervous about using the telegraph freely.

Faithfully yours,
GEORGE W. SMALLEY.

Reid was not content with cabling his thanks to Smalley. When the treaty of peace was in sight he celebrated the occasion by bringing before The Tribune's board of trustees, and carrying, a resolution to send the paper's London correspondent a special honorarium in recognition of his masterly services during the war. They were both inordinately glad when the war was ended. It had been a heavy strain at each end of the wire. Also, it had been an investment of heroic proportions. The cable tolls, amounting at some crises to as much as four thousand dollars a day, were at that time enough to terrify an editor. Reid never blenched and Greeley backed up his policy. To Curtis Guild, who had been noticing in his own paper the magnificent results achieved at the very opening of the war, Reid wrote: "The Tribune is the only paper which has thus far printed a line of special news from either of the armies or from either of the leading capitals during the present European troubles. We have a thoroughly organized corps of correspondents with each army and in the leading capitals. You may perhaps gather some idea of the expenditures we are making in this direction from the simple statement that the mere cable tolls on my despatches to our London correspondent, instructing him as to the organization of this force, cost us over $200 in gold for the first two days." Those despatches of his in the first two days, and the others that steadily followed, were worth the money. He fulfilled his ambition to make The Tribune "the recognized authority on foreign news." It was from one of the most brilliant of modern historians, prejudiced, if anything, against journalistic procedure, that the best tribute to his success was ultimately to come. When Kinglake was writing his "Invasion" he introduced a highly critical chapter on the newspaper correspondents in the Crimea and their relation to "the demeanour of our people" in the matter of that war. Appending a foot-note, he said: "In justice toward the great nation which I like to call 'English,' and sometimes refuse to call 'foreign,' I ought, perhaps, to acknowledge that the extraordinary triumphs of European journalism at the time of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-'71 were due, in no slight degree, to the vigor, the sagacity, and the enterprise that were brought to bear on the objects from the other side of the Atlantic. The success of that 'partnership for the purpose of war news' which had been formed between one of our London newspapers and the New York Tribune was an era in the journalism of Europe, though not in that of the United States, where the advance had an older date, deriving from their great civil war."

CHAPTER XIII

GRANT AND SAN DOMINGO

I have sketched Reid in his relations with Greeley and others closely allied in the making of The Tribune. As I have also indicated, he sought contributors everywhere. Service outside the staff was almost as important to him as service within it. One of the interesting episodes of his treatment of the Franco-Prussian War is a brief correspondence with Kossuth, from whom he tried to obtain letters on aspects of European politics. It came to nothing. The famous patriot preferred silently to watch events from his exile in Turin. "Firm in my convictions, and unfaltering in the hope of the ultimate realization of my aspirations," he replied in his stately fashion, "I reserve for action the remnant of forces which age, public adversities, and the weight of dire domestic afflictions may still have left me." It was characteristic of Reid to make an effort to enlist the old lion, the idol of his youth, and characteristic, too, was his rejection of the aid offered, in substitute, by the younger Kossuth. The article he submitted was not good enough. Sentiment could not sway Reid's editorial judgment. He looked elsewhere, and found what he wanted.

He found it, thanks to the wide intercourse with all sorts and conditions of men which has its origin in the very nature of the journalistic profession. Much of the best material that reaches an editor's desk is unofficial. He records the history of his time with the greater freshness and truth in proportion to the number of "feelers" that he has thrown out into the world at large. As his influence waxes, so do his external sources of information multiply. In the whispering-gallery which the press has been called, he sits, the recipient of a thousand confidences. When he is not weighing the statements of his reporters, he is sifting the communications of friends and acquaintances. Reid could not employ Kossuth, but by good fortune he could at the very moment count upon a really more serviceable observer, reporting to him in private letters which, with the writer's consent, he freely pillaged for his paper. This was John Bigelow, then in Berlin. His status as an ex-diplomat put him in the way of hearing a good deal of unpublished news. His old experience as editor of the "Evening Post" made him a judge of precisely what Reid would want to know. Long versed in public affairs, not only knowing his Europe but adding to a cosmopolitan *flair* for it the humor and shrewdness of an essentially American point of view, he made at once the delightfulest and most helpful of oracles.

He had an affectionate regard for Reid, and wrote to him as he might have talked to him through a long evening at the Century, lightly philosophizing events. He gossiped, as he said himself, but it was the gossip of an intellectual man of the world. His discursive, utterly frank pages, written on the thinnest of old-fashioned thin paper, voluminous, dogmatic, entertaining, were welcomed by Reid as so many bulletins from the zone just outside the war, valuable to some extent on matters of fact, but even more to be read as suggestive comment. Here is part of one of these letters, written while the future of Paris still hung in the balance, repeated sorties beating in vain against the Prussian advance:

Berlin,
December 17th, 1870.

My dear Reid:

The war, I think, is rapidly drawing to a close. Trochu will make one more desperate effort to cut his way with his army out of Paris [there were three more before the capitulation] leaving the Parisians to their fate and to the Prussians. He is not likely to succeed, nor very likely to survive the effort. If he is driven back the government will probably try to escape in a balloon. If, however, they remain it seems to be generally supposed that the people will compel them to make peace before the expiration of the month of January. They will not be permitted to capitulate and go out simply as prisoners. That I think I may say is pretty definitely resolved upon. They must stay in Paris and abide their rat diet or fast in imitation of our jury system, until they can agree to sign such a treaty as Germany will accept. In preparation for that event this Government is reducing to possession all the territory and fortresses that she means to keep, providing them with German laws, officers and flags and effacing as fast as possible all traces of French sovereignty. The purpose of this is that when Trochu & Co. come to sign the treaty they will not have to sign a document that alienates French territory but simply, in regard to territory, accept the *status quo*, leaving with those who occasioned the loss, all responsibility for it.

By taking thus what they please in territory, the pecuniary indemnity will be proportionately less and of that Paris will be required to pay up her share at once in money or paper and it is pretty well understood that the loan negotiating in London by Morgan & Co. will go more to Berlin than to Paris. In this way the balance to be paid after the German army retires will be so much reduced that it will not be worth the while of the rest of France to continue resistance. It will find it in all respects most expedient to accept the situation, kiss the rod and set to work and see if there is any form of government that can suit them more than twenty years at a time.

Trochu wishes to avoid any participation in this treaty if he can and will try in the course of the coming week to cut out. It is expected to result in a frightful carnage. The Germans are under the impression that he will make his sortie in the direction of St. Denis and are preparing for him. The world outside of Paris is so accustomed to the defeat of the French and the success of the German arms that no one seems to anticipate anything but disaster for Trochu. I once had a fight with a cat shut up in a room from which there was no escape for her and since then I have learned to beware of desperate remedies.

You are already aware, I suppose, that Luxembourg has been greased preparatory to being swallowed by Germany. The English press is making a terrible ado about it but you are sure to be misled if you pay any attention to the tone of the English press about anything now occurring upon the Continent. All it reveals correctly is the chagrin and discontent with which the Continental doings inspire the ruling classes in England. You have not forgotten that in 1867 France offered a big price to Holland for Luxembourg and

Bismarck put his veto upon the negotiation at the peril of a war with the Emperor. The King of Holland, who is a nasty creature and over head and heels in debt, is now wishing to sell to Germany, and the circular issued the other day is the first act of the comedy which is being played for the entertainment of Europe while the transaction is being negotiated. I hope Mr. Gladstone and the "Times" will find this out in time "to retire in good order" for of course after consenting or not dissenting from a sale to France they cannot now object to a sale to Germany.

And speaking of Holland, I hear that Motley has been invited by the Queen of Holland to take up his residence at the Hague in a house which she has placed at his disposal. This is the greatest compliment ever paid by a crowned head to any American, I believe, and quite reminds one of the days when Voltaire was the guest of the great Frederick, Goethe the guest of the Duke of Weimar, and some great mathematician whose name I forget made almanacs for the Emperor of Austria. Holland has always proved a favorable climate and country for the student, a country, says Henri Martin, *où le temperature n'excite pas les sens, et laisse à l'esprit plus d'empire sur lui-même.* Nor would it be too much for Holland to give Motley a handsome home for life for he has placed that country under obligations which are without price. If Motley accepts the offer I suppose he with it accepts Holland as his country for the future and wishes to be regarded as no longer a candidate for the honors of his native land.

His diplomatic career, though it has twice decorated him with the crown of martyrdom, has scarcely been a successful one. He hardly got on as well with Fish as he did with Seward, though it was to be presumed that the Historian of the Dutch Republic would have had no difficulty with our Dutch Secretary of State. Such bad luck with two foreign posts so unlike as Vienna and London may have set him thinking that he can be more useful in writing history than in making it. But how will our Dutch Secretary like this implied rebuke from the Sovereign of his Dutch cousins?

Berlin is full of the most delightful people in the world outside of New York, but is not gay in the technical sense this winter, as you may suppose. There is scarce a family in all Germany that is not mourning some near relative whose blood has gone to the purchase of Alsace and Lorraine. The Queen does not go to the opera or any other public places but the hospitals and the church. When the King returns with his victorious army it is unlikely that this will be materially changed. I shall be glad to hear from you when you have time, if ever, to throw away upon a vagrant like myself.

Yours very truly,

JOHN BIGELOW.

All of Bigelow's letters in this period have a decidedly Germanophile tinge. France was in everybody's bad books then, when the sins of the Second Empire were being visited upon the nation, and few commentators had the patience to distinguish between the two. If Bigelow could have foreseen the manifestations of "German frightfulness" in the war begun with the violation of Belgian neutrality in 1914, I dare say his meditations in Berlin on "the most delightful people in the world" might have been a little different. The judgments and impressions he sent to Reid were not by any means all confirmed by the event. But they were very readable and apposite, excellent raw material for "copy," and sometimes they cut to the bone. He was, for example, profoundly convinced that Prussia's success in the war marked only the beginning of an era of unrest. Writing early in 1871 he says: "This I think is quite certain, that whenever France makes peace with Germany and upon whatever terms, Europe will not disarm but on the contrary will be more likely to increase its military strength in every direction. It is not generally known, I think, that Austria was all armed and prepared to attack Prussia at the commencement of this war and only waited some reverses to the Prussian arms which everyone here as well as elsewhere expected from the want of preparation of the Prussians, to march to Berlin. The battle of Woerth put such a different face upon the matter that within a week from that battle Russia, till then uncommitted to either of her neighbors, sent a notice to Austria that if she attacked Prussia she might expect to be attacked by Russia in turn. That threat has kept Austria quiet; that and nothing else. As soon as this war is over Bismarck will come to some understanding with Austria, either as he has done with France, by whipping her, or by such a convention as will protect the Germans from such menaces as that which hung over them previous to the battle of Woerth."

Returning to the subject a few days later, he felt even surer of an increase rather than a reduction of European armaments. "England is preparing to reorganize her army upon the German basis to some extent," he wrote, "and in her old age aspires to be a military nation. Russia has been making and continues to make enormous military preparations. While the present Emperor lives her relations with Prussia are likely to be friendly, at the same time there is a very formidable anti-German party in Russia. France will at first be disposed to enter into any combination that will promise her the best chances for the recovery of her Rhenish provinces about to be taken from her, and revenge." In a postscript written a few days afterward he says: "I learned last evening through a member of the Russian legation that Russia has determined to adopt the German military system, universal military education and compulsory service. The decree has not yet been promulgated but it may be expected any day. I also gathered from a conversation with the head of the English legation here that England is trying to bring about an alliance between Austria and Prussia to resist Russia." The alignments he suggests have hardly been ratified by history. In their insistence upon the bad prospects for European harmony, however, these casual reflections of more than forty years ago possess, in the light of very recent events, an almost startling aptness. And sometimes the prophetic note is without flaw. Witness the foresight in this passage from a letter of February 15th, 1871:

> I enclose by this mail a pamphlet just printed for some members of Parliament but not yet published, explaining the military organization of Germany. The author is a young English gentleman who

was educated in Germany and had reached the rank of lieutenant in the German army. At the commencement of the war he was incapacitated for active service by a fall from his horse and has at the suggestion of his friends consecrated a portion of his involuntary leisure to the enlightenment of the public in regard to the construction of the terrible machine which has in a few short months scattered to the winds the chivalry of France. You will nowhere else find the same information collected in so complete and compact a form and as the United States by her system of comparatively general if not universal education is better prepared than any other nation to profit by this example of Germany, and from the popular character of our government stands more in need of the education and training it implies, you can't begin too soon to study up the question. If I were the conductor of a public journal in America I should set to work at once to educate our people up to the idea of making a knowledge of the arts of war a part of every young man's education as in Switzerland, which I like better than the German system because the military knowledge is there acquired with other knowledge at school in hours usually devoted to recreation and exercise, and therefore without any loss of time, whereas in Germany it is usually acquired during an interruption of school or professional training.

Very suggestive, too, is another of his Berlin comments, apropos of Bismarck's seeking to snub England by asking her to send a minister, instead of an ambassador, to the German capital. "England in general and Lord Loftus [then ambassador] in particular are particularly offensive to this court." The request, as we know, was withdrawn—after its malicious purpose had been served. The world knows, also, with what hidden energy the venomous sentiment behind it persisted.

The war in France has diverted us from the ordinary current of Reid's activity. When he launched Smalley upon the European campaign he remarked to him that nothing was going on in this country, and that but for the war the newspapers would have the dullest of dull seasons. Nevertheless, he was himself desperately busy. He handed Bigelow's letters over to Hay, when they were to be editorialized. "Reid writes very little," the latter reported to their friend in Berlin, "but when it is necessary he beats me two to one." Domestic affairs, cast into the shade by the military events abroad in 1870, were exciting enough in the following year. The Tweed exposures, though initiated by the "Times," and promoted largely by revelations in that paper, were, of course, not negligible in The Tribune, which was, indeed, the first of the dailies to associate itself with the leader in that famous crusade. Just prior to the breaking of this storm Reid had a curious little problem of his own to deal with. Adams's question was up—"Who was Alabama, and what did he claim?" The joint commission appointed to discuss it met in Washington in February and sat until the spring. In May, when the Treaty of Washington was signed, The Tribune published it before its promulgation. Uproar in the Senate ensued, in which Roscoe Conkling was conspicuously active. The two correspondents of The Tribune at the capital were taken into custody, and threatened with all manner of dire punishment for their contumacy in refusing to tell what they were supposed to know about the acquisition of the treaty. They were to be fed on bread and water until they consented to answer. One exacerbated Solon thought that forty years in prison would be a mild reward for their wickedness.

Never was there more savory grist for an editorial mill. As a matter of fact, White and Ramsdell, The Tribune men haled before the Senate for contempt, underwent no suffering in the custody of the sergeant-at-arms. Their rooms were large, airy, and cool, their fare the best to be obtained in Washington, and their friends had ready access to them. Writing gayly from "The Senate Bastille, U. S. Capitol," White reported: "We are, of course, delighted at the noble course The Tribune has taken in this matter and our pleasure is none the less because we see that you are turning the matter to such good account for the paper." Reid handled the situation to Greeley's infinite satisfaction. Incidentally he stored up future trouble. I do not doubt that the ridicule with which he flayed Conkling in the course of upholding his correspondents accounted for some, at least, of the enmity with which that individual long cherished for him in political affairs. Sumner, of course, was Reid's stanch defender, spoke in The Tribune's favor, and presented a resolution for the release of the prisoners. When that came, on the adjournment of Congress, Reid philosophically counted the cost. "We were subjected to some extra expense," he explained to The Tribune trustees; "lawyers' fees, and double salaries to correspondents while in prison being included, it probably amounted to $800. It is doubtful whether the same amount of advertising could have been procured in any other way for $8000." The Tribune profited, which was undoubtedly his object, but it should be added that if the publication of the treaty was an exploit in the field of news, Reid's defense of the correspondents was also recognized as a stalwart blow against secret and inquisitorial methods in the Senate.

There were other more or less sensational occurrences that year, testing his conduct of the paper—the Chicago fire, the Ku-Klux trials in North Carolina, and, in New York, matters of judicial corruption and of custom-house administration, in the exposure of which he rivalled the enterprise of the "Times" in its uncovering of the Tweed scandals. But one subject, San Domingo, dominates in historical significance, and, in view of subsequent developments, requires some consideration in this memoir. Reid's first experience, soon to be discussed, as a campaign manager with a responsibility far heavier and more direct than anything he had known in his work for Fremont and Lincoln, was to involve him in strenuous opposition to Grant. The decisive motive in that, of course, was supplied by his support of Greeley. But it had other sources. If he was Grant's eulogist during the war he was also his critic, and the San Domingo affair did a great deal to turn him from a critic into an opponent.

On the academic question of policy raised by Grant's curious craving for territorial expansion—a craving doubly curious then—I need make no comment, though the later history of the island and of our relations to it might justify some sympathetic reflections. Years afterward, when as a member of the Paris Peace Commission, Reid exercised a powerful influence upon the acquisition of the Philippines, it is conceivable that he might have revised his old judgments on the scheme for the annexation of San Domingo. On the other hand, it is certain that he could never have lost his distaste for the intrigues surrounding it and for the uses to which Grant turned the management of his favorite project. It was the declension of the President's colonial ambition into a personal quarrel with Sumner that crystallized his antagonism. The senator from Massachusetts was not only his friend but a statesman in whose character and ideas resided, as he saw it, something of the hope of the republic. And this man was flouted and insulted by Grant for no other reason than that he would not subserve the latter's foolish whim! Sumner, as chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, was in a position to work with deadly effect against the San Domingo treaties. From the highest motives he did so work against them. Grant tried to placate him, even calling unexpectedly upon him at his dinner-table one night to ply him on the subject, and some years later, travelling in Spain, he spoke to Lowell, then minister there, of his efforts. "Sumner is the only man I was ever anything but my real self to," he said; "the only man I ever tried to conciliate by artificial means." Sumner's answer to all the presidential cajolings was his famous "Naboth's Vineyard" speech, in which he tore the presidential scheme to very fine tatters. Grant's apologists, and Grant with them, made it a personal issue. Reid knew better, and did what he could to affirm his loyalty, though his own position in the matter was one of some delicacy.

How this came about may best be indicated by a note of Greeley's written in the full tide of the conflict: "I send a letter from Hayti about San Domingo matters from my old friend and correspondent, whose name you probably know. She is a San Domingoite, as I partly am and you are not; but she knows what she writes, and her letter is worth the space it will take. Don't bear hard against San Domingo, for I believe its acceptance is Manifest Destiny, and will ultimately be popular." The Tribune's policy on this question was, of course, for Greeley to settle, and Reid was bound to support it. But the two men were wholly frank and outspoken with one another, and after talking over the resolution in the Senate for the appointment of commissioners to proceed to San Domingo, and obtain material for a full report, Reid wrote an editorial which was equally satisfactory to him and to his chief. It approved the commission on the ground that it would at least get information, enlightening the United States as to "whether we are or are not to buy a lively revolution and a dropsical debt," and it wound up with an expression of the utter disgust of the public at the conduct of the senators, whose idea of debating the subject had apparently meant no more than the browbeating of Sumner. "Doubtless he had been imprudent," wrote Reid, "bitter, and unjust, but at least he was senatorial. Some of his antagonists appear to have behaved like Bowery Boys at a Tammany primary. These senators may forget themselves, as the republic will in time forget them; but neither their motives nor his own mistakes can now permanently affect the sure place of Charles Sumner in the esteem of his fellow citizens and the history of his country." Sumner's grateful response was instant:

Washington,
December 24th, 1870.

DEAR MR. REID:

The kindness of your article on San Domingo tempts me to write a word. Read my speech, and you will see that there is not one word of personal imputation or personality towards the President. I assailed this scheme on grounds which nobody answered. It is my nature to be aroused always when I see the weak oppressed, and, as I became acquainted with this San Domingo business my blood boiled. All the evidence shows that at great expense we keep Baez [President of the island government] in power—that without our naval force he would be obliged to flee, and then, still further, in carrying out the same scheme we menace Hayti. I was determined to make sure such an exposure as would make it difficult to pursue the scheme. The only answer to me was a volley of personalities.

I challenge anybody to show one word of misrepresentation. Everything I said is sustained by the evidence; and as to the Presidential pressure it surpasses that of other days against Kansas.

Sincerely yours,
CHARLES SUMNER.

P. S. The resolution was unnecessary, except as a device to commit Congress to the scheme. The President may send agents without an act of Congress,—the most important information is documentary and on the files of the Department.

Where Reid's sympathies were I have already shown, but to the editorial passage quoted above I may add the following reply to Sumner's letter:

New York,
December 26th, 1870.

DEAR MR. SUMNER:

I was exceedingly glad to receive your letter of the 24th instant, both because of the information it contained and because of the grateful assurance it gave me that you understood the kindness intended in the closing paragraph of my article on the San Domingo trouble.

The necessities of the position compelled me to sustain Morton's resolution. Mr. Greeley has committed himself to this view, and although, for my own part, I should greatly prefer to see an end of the whole San Domingo negotiations, yet I cannot honestly divert The Tribune from the policy on which Mr. Greeley has decided. The best I can do is to endeavor that justice be done its opponents. I took the more pleasure in saying what I did of you because, as I said to Mr. Greeley when we were afterwards speaking of it, I have the feeling which I presume most young men who came into politics during the excitements of the organization of the Republican party and the Fremont campaign, entertained towards yourself, Mr. Chase, and one or two others who remain the great figures of the struggle.

I remain, my dear Sir, with great regard,

Faithfully yours, WHITELAW REID.

He did his duty as an editor by the San Domingo expedition, sending one of his Washington men, Ramsdell, to report its transactions, and arranging for letters also from the private secretary of President A. D. White, one of the members of the commission. In the long run it proved the general estimate, and especially at Washington, that The Tribune's correspondence under this head was superior to that of any other paper in the country. But it was only his professional *amour propre* that was gratified. His scorn for Grant's conduct in the matter had been rendered final when immediately upon the rejection of the annexation treaty in the Senate, in June, 1870, the President struck at Sumner by calling for the resignation of his friend Motley, minister to England. This was piling scandal upon scandal. Motley refused to resign, whereupon, a few months later, he was summarily removed.

There was nothing ambiguous about public opinion on this extraordinary episode. Whatever Motley's failings as a diplomat—and that he had them is undeniable

—it was obvious that his dismissal was an act of petty malice, the payment of a grudge against Sumner. However, the errors had to be reckoned with, and there was the question, too, not to be blinked, as to whether Motley had not been, after all, more Sumner's man than the President's, from the beginning. An editorial in The Tribune, written by Greeley himself, when the official correspondence was published, gave some weight to this last point. Sumner's comment upon it, sent to Reid under the impression that he had prepared the editorial, is as follows:

Senate Chamber,
January 12th, 1871.

Dear Mr. Reid:

I have not read the Motley correspondence, except the first and last paragraphs of the reply, which were to me simply disgusting—knowing, as I do, this whole case; but I have read your notice, and I write to correct an idea, at least so far as it may refer to me.

You say that "Mr. Motley's appointment must have been pressed upon Gen. Grant with an urgency which, though he deferred to it, he did not the less keenly feel to have been excessive and annoying." I never spoke to the President on the subject but twice, the first time casually on the stairs of the White House, and never in any way asked or urged the appointment. This is not my habit. I stated to Gen. Grant that, with his admission, I desired to make suggestions with regard to our diplomatic service in Europe. After insisting upon experience and culture I proceeded to recommend strongly the retention of Mr. Marsh at Florence, Mr. Morris at Constantinople, Mr. Bancroft at Berlin, and I then added that this list would be properly completed by appointing Dr. Howe at Athens and Mr. Motley at London, where he had already a position of influence, and I assigned reasons why I thought he could do much there. This was my only conversation with the President on the subject.

When what is called the "brief" for the appointment was made out in the State Department, it stood thus:

John Lothrop Motley,	Massachusetts.
John Jay,	New York.
Horace Greeley,	New York.

This was shown me by the Secretary of State before presentation to the President.

I doubt not that the other persons spoke to the President but I contented myself with the opinions and recommendation I have mentioned, which it seems, were sustained by the State Department. After the appointment was made and Mr. Motley had left, the President spoke to me of him as "the right man for the place." The first intimation of dissatisfaction was after the San Domingo difference, when the President said he wished somebody in London "more American." The idea about Lord Clarendon's death which I am told plays a part is simply ridiculous. A fortnight before that Mr. Fish tendered the mission to me—after entreating me to abandon my opposition to the San Domingo scheme.

Yours very truly,
CHARLES SUMNER.

This letter adds substantially to the documentation of a once poignant and never quite forgotten controversy in our diplomatic annals. Sumner's own words are the best in the refutation of the idea, first put forward by Fish in Grant's defense, that the President would not have saddled himself with Motley if he had not been badgered into making the appointment. But I print them also as a contribution to the development of Reid's position in the campaign of 1872. As Greeley's devoted lieutenant he would have fought Grant in any case. He fought him with a greater intensity of feeling because of the light on Grant which he owed to his correspondence with Sumner.

CHAPTER XIV

GREELEY AND THE PRESIDENCY

If Whitelaw Reid had written the reminiscences which his friends were always urging him to write in the later years of his life, the book would have shed some interesting light on the psychology of the presidential candidate as a type. An editor necessarily looks into that subject. Acquaintance with it must enter into his professional equipment. Reid's knowledge of it was developed out of much personal experience. He was thrown into more or less intimate relations with presidential candidates all his life, and stood very close to several of them in their campaigns. I have shown how, in his youth, his advocacy of Lincoln's nomination estranged him from Chase, and how the latter, afterward, in Washington, nevertheless became his friend again. Thenceforth they were in some sort allies, though not invariably in as close accord on all points as the critics of both were wont to assume. There are elements of interest in the story of their friendship as it bears upon this question of presidential aspirations. The celebrated chief justice was a singular figure in the field where such longings flourish.

In 1864, when Chase was still in the cabinet, he was used—to quote Reid's own words—as a rallying-point for the disaffection which sought to prevent Lincoln's renomination. Some of "Agate's" readers in the Cincinnati "Gazette" were disposed to surmise that he was amongst the disaffected. He was not in that company at all, but, like a good many observers at the time—Greeley among them—kept an open mind on the subject of the nomination. He realized the importance of the military situation as a factor in political slate-making. Weeks before the Chicago convention he was asserting in his correspondence that if events in the field were favorable during the spring and summer, no political power on earth could prevent the renomination and reelection of the President. On the other hand, he saw that even Lincoln's personal popularity might be lowered by military reverses. This was not for him a matter of opinion—it was a matter of fact. Hence he was prepared for almost anything, including a possible carrying of "the Chase movement" to the point where it would function in party councils. In the interim his good-will for Chase and support of him in the "Gazette" had nothing to do with presidential bees. He was concerned solely with the exposition of what he knew to be the truth about the secretary of the treasury's administration of his department. That had been attacked with mean injustice. Reid took an aggressive part in Chase's vindication, a very different thing from electioneering for a rival of Lincoln's. Yet the legend of his having abetted Chase in that rivalry was a fearful long time a-dying, and in campaign after campaign would crop up in the columns of some newspaper adversary. Once this misrepresentation provoked him to set the record straight, and in a letter to Colonel R. J. Hinton, at Washington, he had some things to say which illuminate not only his own position but Chase's. Writing June 13th, 1870, he says:

> The talk of my being an advocate of Mr. Chase as an aspirant for the Presidency has always seemed to me so absurd that I have never thought it worth while to treat it seriously. I earnestly begged Mr. Chase, when he took his seat on the Supreme Bench, to abandon all ideas of the Presidency. I did the same thing before I left for the South in the Spring of 1866, and subsequently wrote him more than once to the same effect. He has more than once told me that he had dismissed all such ideas, and on the last occasion on

> which I met him, in a long and frank conversation with regard to political matters, and recent publications concerning him, he said as I was taking my leave: "I don't care for outsiders, but I want you to believe that I have no ambition save to discharge my duties in the office in which I am now placed, and that I have done with politics finally." Mr. Chase may not know himself—very few politicians, and, for that matter, very few people of any kind do—but that he was perfectly honest at that time in this declaration I don't doubt for a moment. At the same time the necessity of his position is such that he is sure to be the centre of presidential speculation at least until after the next election; and I suppose the fact of my perfectly well known and long continued friendship for him is sufficient in the minds of many to convince them that I am endeavoring, as I think it has once or twice been expressed in the Radical papers, to betray The Tribune.

It is plain enough from this that Chase's attitude in the campaign of 1864 never left upon Reid's mind anything like the virulent impression that it left upon the minds of Lincoln's official biographers. They estimated it—naturally enough, I suppose—at its worst, seeing it in its unloveliest aspects and diagnosing it as symptomatic of an inexcusable ambition. Reid could put it in a less sensational perspective, because he understood it better, apprehended it more accurately as a queer but not at all evil warp of temperament. He was Chase's defender in 1868, when there was some thought of picking the chief justice as a candidate likely to unite the progressive Democrats and the "reasonable" Republicans. After Seymour's nomination Chase was characteristically desirous of establishing an exact record of his relation to the event. Reid saw to it for him, and in their subsequent correspondence there are passages richly explanatory of this figure in our long procession of presidential candidates. "You see," Chase writes, "what need I have to stick to that which can never contradict itself—the truth. Yet even the truth as to our feelings and impressions and even convictions may change so much as to give the impressions at one time the appearance of contradiction to statements made at another." So there was nothing for cynical comment in the remark contained in the same letter: "I am glad and thankful that I was not nominated at New York." Of course he was truly glad and thankful, just as he would have been thankful and glad (like any other mortal) if he had been nominated. The most revealing of the passages I have mentioned is this one, also dating from the campaign of 1868: "A very curiously contrasted character of me might be very easily made out from the writings and sayings of the same man at different times." Reid knew this, and the knowledge of it is reflected in the eulogy which he published in The Tribune when Chase died in 1873.

The tribute was ungrudging, an expression of full and even affectionate understanding. Reid was a pallbearer at the funeral, and was one of those, I may also note, appointed to serve again in that capacity when the body of the chief justice was taken from Washington in 1886 to its final resting-place at Cincinnati. He was, in short, to such an extent a member of Chase's circle that whatever he said about him had the stamp of authority. He spoke always as the loyalest of friends. Nevertheless, the eulogy aforesaid, in its discriminating touches, reflects his lasting sense of that innocent duality which Chase himself had recognized, and he explains, without specifically saying so, why the chief justice could never have been made President. Reid drew in 1873 the distinction he had drawn in 1864. Salmon P. Chase was doubtless the one man to save the treasury from bankruptcy during the Civil War. Lincoln was the one man to guide the nation through the long and terrible struggle. The first presidential candidate with whom he maintained close personal relations over a considerable period of time left Reid with abiding memories of a noble character. His eminent friend left him also without any illusions. Because of this intimacy the student of politics in him became only the more decisively a student of human nature.

It is upon the human nature aboundingly exposed in the campaign of 1872 that I purpose chiefly to dwell in the present chapter. There is no reason for reviewing in exhaustive detail the history of that event. An unsuccessful candidacy is rarely a fruitful subject, and this one is a thrice-told tale. Everybody knows how the shortcomings of Grant's first administration sapped the prestige of the party which had put him in power, how Greeley was inducted into the leadership of an opposition too heterogeneous to be effectively united with the cement of mere discontent, and how he went down under an avalanche of defeat, the presage of his death. But there are obvious reasons, in a biography of Whitelaw Reid, for some survey of the fight as he and certain of his colleagues carried it on under Greeley's banner, and his papers are peculiarly illuminating on the state of men's minds at the time, on various leading personalities, and on the inner spirit and development of a famous political movement.

The gallant, disinterested nature of the enterprise, which has come to be the more generously appreciated as time has healed old political wounds, was conspicuous amongst Reid's articles of faith. The last time I saw him, only a few weeks before his death, we talked at length about Greeley in 1872, and I particularly remember the emphasis he placed upon his chief's unselfish motives. Greeley was no small-souled politician, he said, nor as President would he have been a calculating dispenser of political plums. There was no guile in him at all. Never had there been in political life an embodiment of a cleaner ambition. Principle, and nothing else, was his ruling force; the service of the republic his sole aim. In a foot-note to Watterson's delightful chapter on "The Humor and Tragedy of the Greeley Campaign," Reid says on this point: "With my intimate knowledge of Greeley at that period, I should hardly have said he had a passion for office. What I did think was that he had a passion for recognition, and was very sore at being treated not as an equal and comrade, but as a convenience to the machine, by Seward and Thurlow Weed. It was less office he sought than an opportunity to teach those gentlemen their places and his. Certainly he never had a lifelong passion for office like Lincoln." Reid came to know this very early in his dealings with Greeley, and subsequently his convictions on the subject were being deepened all the time. They caused him to observe with an intensely critical eye every move made in the political world to "use" Greeley, and one reason the latter had for depending upon him was his skill in handling such attempts as they arose. Prior to the presidential campaign he had no formal functions to discharge in the rôle of political coadjutor, but from the beginning he kept a sort of friendly watch and ward over his chief's interests.

The first serious opportunity to do this came in the summer of 1870, when some of the Republicans in New York fondly fancied that the anti-Hoffman movements amongst the young Democracy might help them to win the governorship. Once more "convenience" promoted talk of nominating Greeley. Joe Medill, of the Chicago "Tribune," wrote to Reid about it in high spirits, spurred thereto by a momentous occurrence. He had seen Grant, and the latter was much in favor of the idea! "He had no hesitation in saying that in his opinion it was the wisest thing the Republicans could do. Greeley would poll more votes than any other candidate they could agree upon." Reid hadn't the smallest confidence in his doing anything of the sort, and even a letter from Vice-President Colfax, bringing the same bizarre tidings "about the President and H. G.," left him still sceptical. To Medill he replied, saying: "I am a sort of traitor in the camp, as I told Mr. Greeley last night. I don't want him nominated for Governor because I think this business of nominating him to head a forlorn hope has ceased to be a joke. Still, that is something which cannot be said outside, and which perhaps good fortune this Fall may show to be a thing that ought not to be said at all." He would hope, with the rest of them, while there was a ghost of a chance—but at bottom he never believed in ghosts. Meanwhile he spared no vigilance. A rumor was telegraphed on from Washington that Grant—for all his fine words—was about to tilt over the apple-cart by tendering the English mission to Greeley. Through a friend in the State Department, Bancroft Davis, Reid instantly pointed out to the President and Secretary Fish the embarrassing consequences of any such move, and successfully pleaded that "for the present we be let alone."

The mere excitement of the campaign temporarily heartened him, and he began to wonder if Medill's longing to "see the philosopher Governor, to round out his record before he dies," might not, after all, be realized. Going off to Cedarville for a rest, he made the most of all the favorable auguries and sped Greeley on his way to the convention at Saratoga with cheering words. But he was not really surprised by the result, which left the philosopher to his philosophy, and he read with all the humorous appreciation it invited this message that reached him at his farm:

New York,
September 10th, 1870.

Dear Reid:

You will see that Saratoga went back on your predictions. I think you will know that I didn't take much stock in that undertaking. Hassard sent a donkey named (I think) Miller, who kept telegraphing all manner of bosh, implying that the universe was created in order to have me run in it for Governor, and would go to pot if thwarted in this profound design. Only a little of this got into the paper. But even this was enough to physic a horse.

I am glad my name went into the convention. So many are ready to swear that I always kick the dish over, that I am glad of *one* case in which it cannot be charged that I kicked at all; it is all right every way. And now if Grant will only let me alone, there is no more trouble ahead for two years at least. At any rate, if he should ask me to go to England, I shall decline, and no one will know anything of the matter. But I guess he won't bother me.

Yours,
Horace Greeley.

Grant did bother him, as he bothered a good many others. The issues rapidly ripening for discussion in the forthcoming campaign were all of his making. For Reid, as I have previously indicated, he offered beyond all argument the one salient and vulnerable point of attack, and in his correspondence with political friends the name of the President incessantly recurs. Long before Greeley's outlook brightened he was on the watch for signs that Grant's was growing dark. A typical judgment of his, a year before the battle was joined, is in this letter to Garfield:

New York,
July 17th, 1871.

My dear General:

The riots here [between Orangemen and Irish Catholics] have materially changed the aspect of the presidential question, and greatly helped Grant's chances only because they have greatly helped the chance of carrying the State for the Republicans this fall. Still I don't believe Grant's renomination either assured or very probable. People are constantly reasoning about it from a comparison with the feeling before Lincoln's second nomination but the circumstances are wholly different. Then we were in the midst of a war apparently near its crisis, and Lincoln neglected himself when he told that wonderfully apt story about the impropriety of trading horses while crossing the stream.* Grant's present situation seems to me much more analogous to that of Seward before the Chicago Convention. He was more talked of than anybody else, and consequently drew upon himself the fire of all the others. The one thing to be avoided by Grant's antagonists is the possibility that leading State Conventions will commit themselves to him before the hostility is clearly developed. If the delegates can only come to the convention of '72 as they went to that of 1860, Grant will have his throat cut as dexterously as was Seward's.

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*" I have not permitted myself, gentlemen, to conclude that I am the best man in the country; but I am reminded in this connection of a story of an old Dutch farmer who remarked to a companion once that it was not best to swap horses when crossing a stream."—Lincoln, at the National Union League in New York, on June 9, 1864.

Faithfully yours,
WHITELAW REID.

Garfield, in the long run, could not follow his old comrade in this matter. Neither could Reid's very warm friend in the President's official household, Postmaster-General Cresswell, who was, indeed, "grieved to the soul" by The Tribune's anti-Grantism, and wrote to tell him so. There were other solicitous commentators, in and out of politics, and one of the most candid was Bigelow, writing from Berlin, where he felt that he could see the subject with a detachment "equivalent to the separation of generations." He wasn't in love with Grant, but neither was he indifferent to his merits. He was grateful for the latter, in spite of all the President's "ineptiæ," and in any case he couldn't perceive any one in the offing who would be likely to do better in his place. It was useless to try to fight an administration without a candidate around whose personality public sentiment could crystallize. This was essential. "We could do nothing towards building up the Republican party in 1856 till we got a candidate, and when we got one, though a wretched stick, the party grew like Jonah's gourd." Reid's reply sketches the answer which he had ready for all his critics:

New York,
December 30th, 1871.

MY DEAR MR. BIGELOW:

With me the course of The Tribune has been one of instinctive dislike of men of Gen. Grant's character and calibre for our highest position, and of deliberate belief that it would be best for a great journal like The Tribune to hold itself above party. With Mr. Greeley it has been a dislike of Gen. Grant personally, and belief that he is too small a man for the Presidency, and great dissatisfaction with many parts of his management, particularly with his encouragement of disreputable men, and his partisan interference with the civil service all over the country. That the general estimate of Grant's administration thus far is likely to be favorable, I concede; the payment of the debt and the treaty with Great Britain are great achievements. I am sure we have statesmen under whose guidance each would have been better, but, as it is, each is a success. On the other hand the treatment of the South has not been a success, and it is a significant thing that Gen. Grant's partisan management has resulted in making a Chandler, a Butler, Carpenter, Conkling, Morton, Stewart, and their kind his devoted champions; Sumner, Trumbull, Schurz, Bryant, Greeley, and their kind his determined antagonists.

All Administrations, I suppose, are more or less corrupt; certainly the depth of corruption this one has reached is scarcely suspected as yet, even by its enemies. There is an utter surrender of the Civil Service to the coarsest use by the coarsest men. Mr. Grinnell goes out [of the New York Custom House] to make room for Mr. Murphy. When we drive Mr. Murphy out his counsel and personal representative takes his place.

Faithfully yours,

WHITELAW REID.

It will be observed that he says nothing here about a candidate, and the omission is not altogether due to his absorption in the indicting of Grant. As a matter of fact, the names of Charles Francis Adams, Judge Davis, Sumner, and Greeley had already been bruited about, and in view of subsequent events it would seem quite natural for him to have cited Greeley's as pretty certain to exert all the enkindling influence that Bigelow considered indispensable. But while Reid did more than any other single man to promote Greeley's candidacy, *once it was launched*, he did not invent it, nor did it, in the stages preliminary to launching, wholly commend itself to his judgment.

Though the idea warmed his imagination, he was, as I have said, without illusion in these matters, and, looking at the subject in the cold light of practical politics, he counted his chief's chances without prejudice, never forgetting, in all his calculations, to give Grant the benefit of the doubt. Willing as he was to work without stint to put Greeley in the White House, he was also ready to give all the thought and prudence there were in him to sparing Greeley the pangs of defeat. Convinced that Grant was doing vital damage to Republicanism, impressed by the Liberal movement initiated by Carl Schurz and others in Missouri, and strongly inclined to believe that events portended a break-up of political parties before the election, he could see that on such a troubled sea Greeley might easily prove the chosen helmsman. But he wanted time, and still more time, before he would agree that his old friend's bark might safely be shoved off upon those treacherous waters. Not if he could help it would Greeley ever again be "used," and least of all upon the wide stage of national politics. All through that preliminary period he waited for signs that the Liberal Republicans could really make a fight, something more than an academic demonstration. Then, and not until then, would he take off his coat. In the interim he was careful to note where all the other potential candidates stood. Chance presently brought him enlightenment on one of them.

Early in 1871, when The Tribune began to give a hearing to disgruntled Republicans, Bigelow had noticed some commendation of Sumner. "I marvel that his name has not been presented before," he wrote. "It is because, I suppose, he has more capacity for making friends for his principles than for himself. Besides, we never get madly attached to man or woman who loves all people equally and without distinction of age, color or sex. And yet of all our living statesmen I don't think of one whom Americans will be so proud of as of him when he has been buried as long as Jefferson." Sumner was ill at the time, and Reid sent this passage on to him, to cheer his tedium. It drew from him a letter of value then as indicating his position in the approaching campaign, and of interest now as one more illustration of his lofty nature:

Washington,
February 25th, 1871.

DEAR MR. REID:

I have been much touched by the revelation of your note, which was entirely unexpected. But I beg you to believe that I do not consider myself a candidate for anything—unless it be the good will of good men.

Mr. Greeley and myself are of the same age, both born in 1811; but he is an older as well as a better soldier than I. My controversy has been constant for more than quarter of a century, and during some of this time he has thought kindly of me. If he is disposed to be sharp on me it is because he follows a rule different from mine. My rule has always been never to assail or criticize those who agree with me sincerely in object and aim, although I could not accept their methods.

But I have had enough of combat and am very weary. And yet combat is before me. I cannot look without moral repugnance on this whole St. D. business, and especially the treatment of the Black Republic.

I hope to be in my seat tomorrow for an hour.

Believe me, dear Mr. Reid,

Sincerely yours,

CHARLES SUMNER.

Sumner thus withdrew from the field, of his own volition. Reid thereby knew his ground in that quarter, and could feel free to act with reference to it if occasion arose. Meanwhile the policy of the paper was fixed. Greeley could open his columns to all the irate Republicans in the land, but he was a Republican himself, and, though likewise irate, in no hurry to embarrass the party. He was anti-Grant, but judgmatic about dealing with him. Then, too, his own possible relation to the coming contest made him doubly desirous of postponing the inevitable break. The bad taste of grinding his own axe was as offensive to him as it could be to any one. To a political acquaintance, confident that Grant would have a second term, he wrote in midsummer, in 1871: "I have no gift of prophecy, and will not undertake to compete with you in that line. And yet I see many reasons for my belief that it will be far more difficult to re-elect President Grant than it was to elect him. The only point on which I am positive is this: If the Republicans are to elect a President in 1872, they must let President making alone in 1871. I think the position of candidates has been too early begun, and that it were well for us if no more were said on that point till next Christmas. I shall try to have The Tribune set other journals a good example in this respect. I commend the wisdom of doing in 1871 the work pertaining to that year, and leaving that of 1872 to be done in its proper season."

Reid was more than willing. It was another safeguard against the premature decision he most feared, and in his correspondence at this time there is scarce a trace of Greeley's candidacy—the burthen of it is always the drift of party politics, and, in particular, the swift growth of the Liberal Republican movement. "Does not the political cauldron bubble?" he wrote to his friend Wilkinson in Syracuse. "It is not a fire of thorns under it either, but of a good deal more lasting kind of fuel." I have spoken of the human emotions that still glow in the ashes of this old, buried campaign. They live especially in souvenirs of the happy fervor with which Reid and his comrades looked to the new organization to repair the sins of the old one—it was as if the youth of the Republican party were going to be revived again, in a better fabric. The Cincinnati convention was to be another meeting "under the oaks." Reid spread the good news everywhere and was particularly constant in his jubilant interchanges with his brethren of the craft. A remark of his to Watterson—"the Cincinnati movement goes on gloriously"—is typical of all his reports to editorial friends, and to political correspondents he writes, with the convention impending, in the vein of this note to Senator Allison:

New York,
April 11th, 1872.

My dear Allison:

The Cincinnati movement looks brighter than it did when you were here. Our people who are inside are all confident; the Administration, on the other hand, seems to be equally confident, and indeed pooh poohs the Cincinnati movement, though with a nervousness which indicates the reverse of satisfaction at the prospect. The only movement gaining any strength now is the Cincinnati movement. The Grant force has been developed long ago.

Very truly yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

Greeley insisted that Reid should himself go to the convention, and he left for it in the mood of the foregoing message to Allison. Even then it was first and last as an anti-Grant man that he went West. On the eve of his departure, writing to his old college friend Joe Millikin, he says: "We hope to make the Cincinnati Convention a success, and to defeat Grant by the election of a sound Republican, who was a Republican in the days when Grant's only boast was that he had never voted for anybody but James Buchanan."

He went to the convention a journalist with political enthusiasms and aptitudes. He returned in the same rôle, but with another technic added to his equipment. Reid's career in diplomacy began, of course, only when he was appointed minister to France by President Harrison in 1889. It had its origin, however, at an earlier date, in May, 1872, when at the Cincinnati convention he acted as Greeley's personal representative, kept in close touch with the organization of his chief's followers, and, biding his time until the psychological moment struck, carried off the prize. Never did a political lieutenant shoulder more delicate responsibilities. It was then that his diplomatic faculties were called into play, and in the period immediately following they were, of necessity, sharpened day and night. This was a reform convention and there seems always to be something Alpine about political reformers. They call a little frostily to one another from peak to peak, each very happy on his glacial height, nourishing his ego on an air on which the ordinary mortal is fain to choke to death —and they are terribly indisposed to come down and foregather with the crowds in the valley below, where men give and take, indifferent to each other's foibles. Reid was a reformer himself, but he was too busy to sit upon a peak, too busy shepherding, amongst others, those who were thus aloofly elevated. He had to get the reformers together after the convention. Hence, as I say, his diplomatic efflorescence.

Greeley's nomination, receiving as it did a large impetus from his personal popularity, was nevertheless—in the convention—the outcome of fortuitous circumstances. It emerged from a welter of cross-purposes, and amongst the men who left Cincinnati committed to his cause there were numbers who had gone there with no intention whatever of supporting it. This was especially true of the famous journalistic "Quadrilateral," which had so heavy a share in the earlier proceedings, eliminating Davis and paving the way, as they fancied, for the adoption of a programme utterly of their own devising. Neither Sam Bowles nor Horace White was inclined to advocate Greeley. Far from it. The most they could do in the way of harmony was to unite on Charles Francis Adams, the candidate whose attitude toward the whole Liberal Republican affair was one of Adamsesque disdain! Halstead, more than a year before, had nominated Greeley in his paper, but he could realize well enough, at the convention, that other things were toward and was willing to wait upon their development. Watterson, a Southern Democrat, though friendly to the philosopher, was of a similarly open mind. Taking Reid into their counsels, not because they wanted to but because they had to, they looked askance at the candidacy they suspected to be within his ideas. Schurz, the orator and high pontiff of this tabernacle, was for Adams or Trumbull, preferably Adams. The mere medley of their views would make subject for diverting comment. Yet it is not of the composition of their first differences that I would speak. All that lies behind the fact of Greeley's nomination, and it is enough to state that when Gratz Brown hurried on from Missouri, furious over rumors of the betrayal of his own chances, to throw to Greeley the substantial support he could command, the thing was settled. It is in the ensuing part of the drama that the "human nature" of the campaign comes vigorously to the surface, and Reid's diplomatic adroitness is tried, sometimes to the breaking point. I must turn here to Colonel Watterson's pithy note on the situation:

> The Quadrilateral had been knocked into a cocked hat. Whitelaw Reid was the sole survivor. He was the only one of us who clearly understood the situation and thoroughly knew what he was about. He came to me and said: "I have won, and you people have lost. I shall expect that you stand by the agreement and meet me as my guests at dinner tonight. But, if you do not personally look after this, the others will not be there." I was as badly hurt as any; but a bond is a bond, and I did as he desired, succeeding partly by coaxing and partly by insisting, though it was uphill work. Frostier conviviality I have never sat down to than Reid's dinner. Horace White looked more than ever like an iceberg; Sam Bowles was diplomatic, but ineffusive; Schurz was as a death's head at the board; Halstead and I, through sheer bravado, tried to enliven the feast. But they would have none of us, nor it, and we separated early and sadly, reformers hoist by their own petard.

And these were the men with whom Reid now had to work! Naturally, they did not fail him. From the moment they had combined to further the progress of the Liberal Republican movement they were sworn to rally round its appointed standard-bearer. But it is to be remembered that they were all men of decisively marked individuality, independent journalists, with that habit of mind—authoritative, shall we call it?—which goes with editorial power. Team-work was what they loved—only not in harness. I don't know what Reid would have done if Watterson and Halstead hadn't been in the group, men of humor both, never missing an aspect of the campaign that had a trace of lightness about it. Required to give all his energies from day to day to the management of The Tribune, Reid was none the less obliged constantly to turn aside from that task to straighten out some little political tangle. And Greeley himself, of course, was not by any means to be neglected.

The very generosity of the man laid him open to intrigue. Good faith like his breeds almost too ready a confidence in the good faith of others. Was a question asked? Greeley's first impulse was to answer it, regardless of the possible purposes of the questioner. His fame as a writer of letters had long been abroad in the land. With all his native shrewdness he was still ideally easy to "draw." The nominating vote had scarce been recorded when the enemy began to prod him with inquiries. There was, for example, the burning question as to what the Democrats might or might not do when they held their convention, and Greeley's own reflections on that problem were of intense interest to everybody concerned. He was nominated at Cincinnati on May 3rd. Only four days later the "World" was plaintively asking for light. "If Mr. Greeley is a proper Democratic candidate," it remarked, "let the party have a frank statement of the reasons why he ought to be nominated." Greeley would have let them have the reasons offhand—he was in fighting trim by now—but his lieutenant had other views, which I reproduce as a specimen of his political judgment:

New York,
May 9th, 1872.

My dear Mr. Greeley:

I looked for you after having read through the editorial which you wanted me to examine, but you had gone. Liberally construing your instructions to me about it, I have felt sure that the best thing I could do for you, would be to leave it out. My objections to it are two-fold. First, that there are some things said in it which the Presidential candidate of a great national party ought not to say save in the most formal manner possible in his letter of acceptance, or otherwise; and second, that such candidate ought not, under any circumstances, to permit himself to be drawn into newspaper controversies with anybody on any subject. The moment you begin to let the press of the country see that you hold yourself ready to answer questions which they discharge at you, that moment, to use the language of the Bowery, they have you on a string, and it would not take a month of such work to make an end of the most brilliant prospects of the most popular candidate that ever received a nomination. It seems to me that there is no salvation for you save in standing squarely on the platform of the party which has nominated you, and in declining to answer any question or make any formal expression. Dangerous as letters from presidential candidates are, editorials in explanation of position would be a thousand fold more dangerous.

With your permission I shall endeavor to keep The Tribune out of all newspaper controversies. This is the uniform policy of the London "Times," and it seems to me that there is no better occasion for us to introduce it here. For myself I mean to make no reply to the dirty attacks of the "Times" upon me, or to the malignant onslaughts of the "Post" upon our position. If we are grossly misrepresented it is always possible to make a brief impersonal statement setting the matter right without naming the newspaper or provoking controversy. I feel sure that this is an indispensable feature of our policy for the campaign, and hope that in this judgment I may have your approval.

As to the particular case in question, I don't see how any harm can be done by utterly ignoring the "World's" question. I see nothing but harm to result from any offer to answer them. When the formal notice of your nomination reaches you and you make your formal reply, that, it seems to me, should be most carefully considered, and with it should end any public or avowed utterance of yours from the beginning to the end of the campaign.

This has been from the beginning my own judgment. I know, however, from scores of letters and from the expressions of all our leading friends, that it is also the universal judgment. I hope you may approve it.

Always faithfully yours,
WHITELAW REID.

Greeley was cheerfully amenable. The editorial stayed out. But, I repeat, he was very human. People *would* write him letters, and he *would* answer them, to the distraction of his backers. They got at him with tears and adjurations, but with the Democratic convention just in sight they would find him, in print (though publication was not his fault), making this helpful observation to a New England correspondent: "I have no possible claim to Democratic support and never made any." This had the effect of a red-hot poker upon Watterson's iceberg friend, Horace White, and while disdaining to worry about its particular harmfulness, if it had any, he threw off some steam as to the general principle involved:

Chicago,
June 27th, 1872.

DEAR MR. REID:

I observe that Mr. Greeley has written *one* letter at least since the tacit agreement which he made, or which Mr. Hutchins and myself understood that he made, that he would write no more. I see nothing specially objectionable in *this* letter. He has apparently shot an apple off our heads. But I cannot avoid asking whether he is going to continue shooting. Have we not anxieties enough resting upon us, without this additional and most unnecessary one? Has Mr. Greeley forgotten that Clay killed himself and almost broke Mr. Greeley's heart by writing one letter? Has he forgotten Cass's experiment in letter writing?

My wife sails for Europe next month. If I supposed that this business of shooting apples off people's heads was to continue I would certainly go with her and remain until after the election.

Yours very sincerely,
HORACE WHITE.

White had to be soothed. Everybody had to be soothed. Bowles was in a quaint state. He knew Greeley well. "He is not a man to be put into leading strings like any ordinary candidate," he wrote to Reid. But Bowles, gloomily convinced that they were not to have a holiday campaign, that the result would be doubtful down to the very day of the election, stoutly clamored for Greeley's immediate retirement from the editorship of The Tribune. He was willing that the candidate should write for the paper over his own name or initials, but on the main point the Springfield oracle was fixed. From him, as from others in the camp, there steadily went up the cry: "The old gentleman must quit!" Greeley saw that himself, with his usual faculty for grasping a practical point, and in his famous "card" of May 15th made his withdrawal from the conduct of The Tribune, thereby soothing some terribly agitated bosoms. Until he did so, however, Reid had absurd difficulty in showing his anxious colleagues that his tongue was necessarily tied on the subject, that he was, in fact, powerless. And there were other restless souls to be stilled, as well as critics to be answered. Grave inquirers had to be assured that Greeley was neither bibulous nor profane, and Charles Dudley Warner needed to be instructed in the fact that the Liberal Republican movement was not a parade but a battle. Luckily there were some of Reid's friends who guessed his trials and had the good sense to send him only encouragement and cheer. In the intervals of trying to satisfy a thousand impossible demands it was heartening to hear from Watterson. Against such attacks as we have observed him mentioning in his letter to Greeley, he could set, for his private consolation, congratulations like these from his friend William Henry Smith, of the Western Associated Press:

Chicago,
May 14th, 1872.

My dear Agate:

It is not too much to say—and no person in attendance on the Cincinnati Convention had better opportunity for forming an impartial opinion—that the nomination of Mr. Greeley was really due to the rare judgment and firmness displayed by you on that occasion. A friend less self-possessed or less true, occupying the same position, would have failed; that is, he could not have preserved for twenty-four hours that morale in the Greeley band, composed as it was of discordant elements, which defeated every artifice of the opposition and snatched victory from the grasp of the Adams men, who felt sure of their right to it with all the confidence of an heir apparent. And, too, very few could have succeeded so well in speedily healing the wounds of the discomfited enemy.

I have bought me a white hat!

Very truly yours,
William Henry Smith.

"Speedily healing the wounds of the discomfited enemy." It is a good saying. That was a large part of Reid's task. In his reply to this letter there is an observation which I have found confirmed in many quarters. "I think," he says, "I came away from Cincinnati without having made a single enemy for Greeley, but I am sure I helped make him some friends." In the continuance of that devoted policy he was well supplied with material for amused reflection—in after years. Even at the moment there must have been laughter in some of the little storms he had to quell. David A. Wells, the eminent tariff reformer, was always at odds with Greeley over his favorite issue, required all sorts of careful grooming before he would "come in," and then was in a fret because he could not be sure of the treatment he might receive at the hands of the candidate. "I am just in receipt of a bit of intelligence," he writes to Reid, "which sets me all adrift again. It is to this effect, that notwithstanding Mr. Greeley's announcement in his letter of acceptance that he would not discriminate against his former free-trade opponents, in case he was supported by them, and notwithstanding the assurances I have from Gov. Fenton that he was willing to bury the hatchet so far as myself was concerned, I have it on authority that does not admit of a doubt that Mr. Greeley in conversation still continues to denounce Mr. Atkinson, Mr. Grosvenor and myself as representative free-traders in the most scurrilous language." He was ready to produce affidavits in support of the damning charge. I pass over the vortex of investigation, pleas of justification, explanation, recrimination, and reconciliation into which Greeley, Bowles, Wells, and Reid were all incontinently plunged, with letters flying about like spray, a published speech at the bottom of it all. But the clearing up of the business, by Wells, who had been the fussiest, is too good to be lost. "I have an explanation," he says, "of the *cur* speech. It occurred in one of the reports of Atkinson's speech. He said 'we distrust the Greeks bearing gifts'—and the reporter put curs for Greeks." As Reid digested this silly sequel to the long, superfluous chapter of errors which had been inflicted upon him, he must have turned with piquant appreciation to another note, this one from Hay, lying just then upon his desk: "My dear W. R. I am going to Cold Spring today to pass the night. Be cool and you will be happy. J. H."

Of all those associates in the campaign who kept life cool and happy for Reid, the most pertinacious, I think, was Carl Schurz. His case was not without its pathetic aspect. He had not wanted Greeley for a candidate in the first place. We have seen him at the Cincinnati dinner, "a death's head at the board." He swallowed the ticket only with an effort, and it left a bitterness under his tongue which he did not pretend to conceal in writing to Greeley, just after the convention, on his inability to shape an immediate course for himself. To Reid he wrote in the same inspiriting vein:

Washington,
May 20th, 1872.

My dear Sir:

I am very sorry to learn that I shall not have an opportunity to talk with you. There are many things which it is difficult to write.

I do not know whether Mr. Greeley has shown you my correspondence with him. If he has you will understand my views and feelings concerning the present situation of things. I spoke to him with entire candor, deeming it my duty to do so, although I know well how seldom that kind of spirit is rightly appreciated.

Mr. Greeley writes me that he now sees his way clear. I think he is indulging in a delusion. The reports he receives are naturally all favorable. I am probably the only croaker among all his correspondents. But I have opportunities of observation which he has not. We have not only not been gaining since the Cincinnati Convention, but except perhaps in the South, where under all circumstances the movement was bound to go like wildfire, we have not regained one half of the support the movement had before, and lost by, the nomination. That support is now to a great extent based upon the pressure of the alternative, "Grant or Greeley," and a very large portion of it would vanish at once, did any possibility present itself outside of that alternative. But even should that alternative remain, that is not the spirit which will make a vigorous campaign.

I wrote to Mr. Greeley, that, if there was any doubt in his mind as to whether he should accept the nomination, it is not quite time yet to form a final decision. His way is less clear today than it was a week ago.

I esteem Mr. Greeley so highly and I cherish so sincere an affection for him personally, that it is very painful for me to tell him things which may be unpleasant to him. But I cannot help it. I have so much of personal responsibility in the Liberal Republican movement that its fortune, one way or the other, cannot be a matter of indifference to me.

Truly yours,

C. Schurz.

I shall be very glad to hear from you, but should be happier still to see you here.

Here was another Brutus come to judgment. "Not that I loved Cæsar less, but that I loved Rome more."

There was no blinking the danger on the horizon, and Reid hurried to Washington to learn the worst of those "many things which it is difficult to write." His account of them, in a letter to Bowles, gives a vivid idea of his difficulties:

New York,
May 26th, 1872.

My dear Mr. Bowles:

I found Schurz talking very badly in Washington the other day. He is contemplating a bolt and trying to persuade himself that it would be possible to have the side show at Cincinnati (I have forgotten what the long name of it was) reconvened, make up a new Liberal Republican ticket headed by either Adams or Cox, present it to the Baltimore convention, get it accepted by that convention, and so either force Greeley off the track or leave him without supporters. I talked with some emphasis on this subject, saying among other things that it might possibly result in the defeat of Mr. Greeley, but would in that case only make sure the re-election of Gen. Grant and the ruin of the man who accomplished it, adding that we sincerely deplored a fight but that if we had to do it only asked that it be made open and we would promise to make it warm enough. Before I had left I had much more hope that Schurz would see the fatal character of the policy he was contemplating, and letters I have had from Washington since greatly encourage me. I should above all things regret such a defection as seemed to threaten us last week. Schurz is immensely strong and is the kind of man we ought to save. Evarts and Atkinson, I have been told, have been stirring him up.

Always very truly yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

The defection didn't occur. "If you know how to encourage Carl Schurz, do it," Reid wrote to Horace White. The word was passed along and all the faithful put their oars in. The famous Fifth Avenue Conference was called, at which the malcontents got together—and concluded to stick together, this time with Greeley. Schurz's doubts were set, to some extent, at rest. A few days later he was writing from St. Louis for certain documentary ammunition the candidate had promised him. "Please see to it," he writes to Reid, "that I get his reply as soon as possible and that the original is to be accompanied with a good legible copy so that all mistakes be avoided which his awful chirography might occasion. I intend to speak as soon as I can get ready." Thus at last, some six weeks after the convention, its leading spirit brought himself to abide by its decision. He made numerous speeches in the campaign, but it is hardly surprising to find the editors of his "Reminiscences" remarking of these speeches that "they were naturally against Grant rather than for Greeley."

In Reid's comment on Watterson's story of the campaign in the "Century," from which I have already quoted, there is a note on the drolly mixed relations between himself and the Quadrilateral. "While you all thought you were taking me into camp, I was comforting myself with the belief that I was taking the Quadrilateral into camp, and should find them very useful articles to begin housekeeping with." Halcyon housekeeping it was, as the reader has, no doubt, detected, the housekeeping of a galaxy of glorious incompatibles. I cannot leave this serene *ménage* without one or two more glimpses. Least of all could I omit this endeavor of Watterson's, in a letter to Greeley, to bring brooding peace where, even after the burial of the hatchet, it vainly fluttered:

Louisville,
July 21st, 1872.

My dear Sir:

Well, I suppose you saw Schurz and talked the old talk over again. You and he are so different in temperament—and yet in a few things so very much alike—that I have feared you could never come quite to understand one another. I believe Schurz to be a truthful, candid man—not over selfish or conceited—with a deal of inspiration and culture guided by the unpractical practicality of the *litterateur*, who has achieved a great place in public affairs. I know him intimately and am fond of him. But, my dear Mr. Greeley, like you yourself—like all men of genuine affections and strong will—he has his angles, and these can only be got round by the sort of kindness which composes children, for both of you, believe me, are in your personal relations, ardent, outspoken and childlike. I am sure that I make no mistake in this that Schurz takes a disinterested, meddlesome, childlike concern in you—very much the concern I take in him—and that this sentiment, though sometimes annoying and always exacting, is still a thing to be proud of, to be valued and to be tolerated.

Pray forgive me if I am absurd in throwing out these hints, not in the way of counsel but merely as bits of information, the result of much knowledge of Schurz and of a warm desire to keep our little family together; for it is small and will need to stick. You are going to be elected and then the trial—the real trial—of your life will come. I have feared there was danger of a division with Schurz and that kind of personal alienation which comes from incompatibility of temper, not of interests and ideas. The principle of your whole life, and I know I do not read your career a-wrong, is embraced in the impulse of this campaign. To that Schurz is really devoted. In its practical development he will be a power for good or ill, and, aside from public considerations, there is a sentimental consideration why he should be closely allied to your Administration.

I am writing, as I would talk, out of hand as it were, and, begging your pardon for detaining you so long, have merely to add the hope that we shall have an opportunity to show you in September the real personal enthusiasm we all have for you.

Sincerely,

H. Watterson.

How did Greeley carry himself under the affectionate admonitions of the various members of this "little family" of his? He freely, gratefully, and sometimes even submissively, took counsel with Reid. But Reid was his staff to lean upon, and his intimate. Elsewhere he made frequent concessions—he was notably patient with Schurz—but he could be restive, also, and, on occasion, as disconcertingly plain-spoken as any of them. Though he wanted support in the campaign, he was not the man to placate anybody for it. Characteristic is this to Reid: "As to Sam Bowles, and the rest, I am always glad to see and to confer with them, but I do not *solicit* interviews or support. I shall be very glad to meet the Senators you name, or any of them, but not as a suppliant for their support. They must determine their own course.

If they are with me in the fight all the better." To this attitude he adhered himself, and though detached from the conducting of The Tribune he commended it to Reid as fitting for the paper. Writing from New Hampshire in August, he says: "Please have a strong article reprobating the practice of boring, bullying and browbeating people to make them act and vote as they prefer *not* to do. It is the chief business of the Grant men at present. We shall carry New Hampshire and Rhode Island." If he was to carry any State, he wanted it to be through the determination of its people to fix their own course. In a letter to Warner, Reid refers to his chief as "pugnacious but not warlike." He could be savage, at the moment, with an opponent. There was in him no instinct for the organized, sustained domination of his fellows, and he was as innocent as a baby of the ruthlessness which war connotes. The echoes of his campaigning as I have seemed to hear them in the reconstruction of his intimate circle have about them much of simple valor, of disinterested truth, and—most personal of all—of a great, buoyant faith in his countrymen. I do not know anything that could justify my threshing over at this point the views that he held on the tariff, the views so abhorrent to Wells and the rest; but I must find room for his reply to the political supporter who wanted to know what he would do with this problem if he were elected:

New York,
HON. WM. D. MURPHY. August 25th, 1872.

Dear Sir:

The Cincinnati Platform and my letter of acceptance seem to me as clear as anything I could say on the subject. They remit the whole question of Tariff to Congress, where I believe it should rest. A President may recommend; I do not think he should veto any Tariff bill but one passed by corruption. Such a one he should veto though he approved every line in it.

Yours, HORACE GREELEY.

That swift deviation into the moralities, at the close, is pure Greeley, and supplies a good key to the sympathy with which he was listened to by the people. As the event proved, they would not vote for him. The sheer honesty of his appeal, when he and the voters were face to face, met with an extraordinary response. Watterson wrote to Reid of the electrifying effect of the candidate's speeches in Kentucky, late in the campaign. The condition of things had been alarming. The party managers, as he said, "had just as good as given up the ghost." But Greeley talked to the people and Watterson could gleefully report: "The situation out here is revolutionized and reversed." The recipient of this good news acknowledged it with these comments:

New York,
October 2nd, 1872.

My dear Watterson:

I have just got yours of the 28th and am only sorry that Mr. Greeley slipped off to deliver his agricultural address in Berks. Co., Pa., before I could show it to him. He would, I am sure, be greatly gratified by it. For myself, I have hesitated to say in The Tribune how highly I have thought of his speeches. They seem to me perfect, being at once strong, terse, comprehensive, adapted to the plainest understanding and yet rising at times to true eloquence. The old gentleman came back tired but jolly, and after a night's sleep looked as offensively fresh as if he had not gone through days of exhaustive work. When I told him he had tired out all the boys, he replied with a sardonic smile, "You know that I am as tough as a boiled owl." I wonder if he hadn't boiled crow in his head at the time.

Hay and I have both been worked to death, and Hay, poor fellow, is not very well. Still, we both managed to endure three hours of opera last night.

Always very truly yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

Hay and Reid, worked to death, recall us to what the reader must remember was, after all, Reid's chief and nearly overwhelming responsibility, the management of the paper. Behind the politics with which he was unremittingly concerned, behind all the pacificatory duties thrust upon him, lay The Tribune, and there, even more than in the campaign as a campaign, Greeley's interests and his own demanded the most strenuous exercise of his thought and energy. He had faced some stiff problems as a journalist, but this was the stiffest of them all, so far, and it would be futile to pretend that it did not tax him hard. To manage The Tribune as an organization was, by this time, easy enough. To manage it while its founder was a presidential candidate was the thorniest kind of exploit. The following letter gives Reid's own account of what it meant to him:

New York,
June 24th, 1872.

MY DEAR SMALLEY:

Yours of the 6th came over a week ago and if I had not been exceedingly busy should have had an earlier answer. I didn't think it worth while to go into the formal business of announcing myself as the Acting Editor in Chief, just as I did not think it worth while four years ago to go into the business of announcing myself as the Manager, or to sign every letter I wrote Managing Editor. These are the signs of a departed regime.

I am exceedingly obliged for your congratulations, and still more for your good opinion of the rather hazardous experiment I have been trying in journalism. Nobody knows better than you how impossible it will be to go through the campaign without making more exertions for the election of Mr. Greeley than would naturally be consistent with the idea of a thoroughly independent journal, whose main object is the honest elucidation of the news and comment upon it from the highest grounds rather than the advancement of a particular candidate's interests. Journalistically, the fortune of The Tribune would have been made if Chas. Francis Adams had been nominated, and I saw that just as clearly at Cincinnati while working for Mr. Greeley, as I do now. But Mr. Greeley had been put forward, his heart was in it, he had personally asked me to go to Cincinnati as his immediate representative, and I did the best I could for him.

But I should have shrunk from all the cares and distractions of this place if I could have done it honorably. Now it begins to get easier again and I think we shall go through with the campaign with flying colors. The Weekly is increasing very largely in circulation, and has been ahead every week since the first of January. Our daily is suffering the usual summer falling off, and has hardly begun to experience yet the campaign demands but the paper is in a thoroughly healthy condition, and neither our correspondence, our circulation or our business gives the slightest trace of reason for any suspicion that our constituency is displeased with our independence.

I am particularly gratified by your approval of my policy of printing the views of both sides. I have had some little opposition to it here, but believe everybody is now a convert to it. For myself I am perfectly sure that nothing else could have saved us from a damaging attack all along the line during the first two weeks of Mr. Greeley's candidacy. For some weeks I felt that it was incumbent upon us to move with excessive caution in our editorial columns and to avoid much praise of Mr. Greeley. As the campaign grows warmer and as the Democrats declare their position, we begin to strike out more freely, and after Baltimore shall make a pretty lively political fight.

I have wanted a dozen times since the nomination to give you some idea of the prospect, but in truth I never found the time. I was confident when I went to Cincinnati that we would be able to secure the nomination. Immediately after it I expressed to the doubting and bewildered politicians, who didn't know whether to laugh or to be angry at what they considered a preposterous joke, my firm conviction that the election in November was even more certain. For a long time even the sagacious men here disbelieved in the Democratic endorsement, but we have never doubted it, and I think now that it is as well nigh as certain as anything in the political future can be. Our people talk rather wildly about the prospect, some of them going so far as to say we shall leave Grant only 3 or 4 states. I am not so certain of this. Events seem to have shaped themselves in our favor in Pennsylvania and Indiana, which I feel pretty confident we shall carry in October. Of Ohio I have far less confidence. In Maine, which votes early, we ought to make a good fight, and I should say that with as much good fortune in the next three months as we have had in the last three, the chances incline in our favor. North Carolina, which also votes early, we ought to carry. We are confident of two New England states, Connecticut and Rhode Island, reasonably hopeful that we have about equal chances in Maine and New Hampshire, and have no sort of hope of anything in Massachusetts, although Frank Bird is enthusiastic and Sumner may yet do wonders, if he could only contrive to understand himself and his time.

But we have got past the point where we depend on one or two leaders; in fact many of the leaders have been against us all along, especially in the Democratic party; but the Greeley movement has really aroused the people and they have taken the reins in their own hands. It is, more than anything I have seen since the Fremont campaign, a genuine popular movement. The democratic masses are in earnest and mean to get out of the ruts, and we shall have in many of the States a Liberal Republican strength which will startle Grant.

Always faithfully yours,

WHITELAW REID.

Early in this chapter I indicated that it would be closely confined to the merely human aspects of the campaign, and nothing could come more definitely under that head than the confidence, so clearly reflected in the foregoing letter, engendered by Greeley and the Liberal Republican movement. If Reid's judgment on the prospects of his friend was in the upshot belied, it had every conceivable basis in the tendencies wide-spread during the first half of the campaign. As Watterson said of the nomination, "the people rose to it," and by the time the Democrats held their convention at Baltimore in July the public pressure for ratification of the ticket was so strong that, as he remarks again, "the leaders dared not resist it." The conviction that Greeley would win seemed then in a fair way to become universal. Yet within a few brief weeks there were unmistakable signs of reaction. Even while Greeley's speeches were restoring, as I have shown, the depressed spirits of his supporters, the facts were portending a stern answer to his eloquence. The zealots who had at first talked grandly of conceding "three or four States" to Grant sensed only too soon the bitter truth that they could carry but little more than that number for his opponent. Reid, as we have seen, thought even in June that such talk was rather wild, and as the fight wore on a man of his political experience was bound to perceive with rapidly increasing clearness the inevitable end. The situation was not, indeed, excessively obscure.

Looking about for the causes of Greeley's defeat, commentators have touched upon the apprehensions of the business world, surmising that in a period of reconstruction the country felt safer with Grant than with a man of no administrative experience, no matter how much it respected him on other grounds. No doubt this prudential impulse had its influence. But in the contemporary view of the matter party lines were the factors of capital importance. "The philosophy of the campaign is just here," wrote Horace White to Reid about the middle of September. "If the Democratic vote can be held for Greeley there are Liberal Republicans enough to elect him." Reid was absolutely of the same belief. "Our people did their share of the fight," he wrote on election night, "and the Democrats fell back, that's the whole story." The Democrats, as he explained to Smalley, had at no time gone into the work heartily. This was due in a measure to the fact that a good many of them were dissatisfied with the idea of contributing most of the votes in a coalition where they got no representatives, but more to the lack of organization in the party itself. Senator Casserly told him, immediately after Baltimore, that the Republicans had always been deceived in supposing the Democratic organization perfect. Under their twelve years of defeat, he said, it had run down until it was worse than the organization of the old Whig party had ever been. Thus enlightened and prepared, Reid met the decision philosophically and even with calm, but not, of course, without the deep inner sorrow which was rooted in sympathy for his chief. Loyalty had sustained him in the fray, and it kept him with a stiff upper lip as the votes were being counted. Smalley wrote him in high wrath against the Democrats when the result was made known, and in his reply there is a passage showing how far he went in his demeanor before the world ere he gave up the battle. "Like you," he says, "we were not expecting quite such an avalanche. We still hoped indeed to the last that there was a chance for New York, though a few evenings before the election I made up my mind that Democrats like Tilden had abandoned it. Tilden himself told me the other evening that when he and I met on the evening before our Waterloo he was trying to keep up my spirits by refusing to let me know that he had abandoned it, precisely in the same way I was acting towards him." He preserved his spirit from loyalty and in obedience to the dictates of his character. In the voluminous record of the campaign that is embodied in Reid's correspondence there is no more typical expression than this to his friend Wilkinson, written as the last returns came in: "I, too, have practised your Wall St. virtue, and since the day after the Pennsylvania election have discounted the result, though I did not admit even to myself that all was lost, believing that the true way to fight your ship was to keep on firing till the muzzle of the last gun was under water."

Horace White, commenting upon Watterson's sketch of this campaign, thought that his old comrade in the Quadrilateral had made too much of what was humorous in the subject and too little of what was grave. He wondered if those who read it would be brought to realize the full weight of the issues then toward—"disfranchisement, or Santo Domingo, or nepotism, or whisky frauds, or civil service rapine, or the real causes of the uprising of 1871–72." The criticism is not wholly relevant. In a formal history of the epoch it is true that the matters cited by Mr. White must loom large. From any other point of view the appeal of the campaign must remain that of an extraordinary personal adventure, forever bringing us back to the traits and proceedings of a handful of brilliant men. In this biography it emphatically so operates. The episode, as it reacted upon Reid, left no permanent mark upon his political character, save in so far as it confirmed him in his ideas of independence. To that extent the movement which he had insisted was not a parade but a battle continued to give him impetus and force.

CHAPTER XV

NEW YORK IN THE SEVENTIES

The New York of the seventies lies separated from the New York of our own time by differences on which the statistics of the census-taker throw but the thinnest of watery lights. He gave the city, at the beginning of that decade, a population of something under a million. Doubtless this implies a fine, large, metropolitan state of things; but it affords no very profitable clew to the atmosphere Whitelaw Reid breathed when he came to make his permanent home in the East. I find such a clew, rather, in an allusion made by Henry James, in the recollections of his boyhood, to "the small, warm, dusky, homogeneous New York world of the mid-century." That was the world, persisting well after the fifties, in which Reid established his new fortunes. It kept its character for a long time, and it is not in the growth of numbers but in the march of science that evidences of progress and change within its borders are to be detected. The tone of New York life, and that especially characteristic thing, its pace, still obeyed the habit of an earlier generation. The movement of the city, accelerated by the war, nevertheless was leisurely compared with what it is now. It awaited, as that of the whole country awaited, further expansion of our inventive genius.

In his Western childhood Reid had been unconsciously affected by the tremendous strides made in railway building. In his young manhood he had witnessed the influence of telegraphy upon journalism. Now, as the editor of a great New York daily, he saw the introduction of hardly less momentous factors in the speeding up of social and business life. He had a pioneering bent and was sympathetic to them all. The typewriter, for example, was just coming in. His letter-books show that he was one of the first to give it a trial. The interest in the subject, which was then wide-spread, sprang in his case from a particular curiosity as to devices of the sort. Later on he was a leader in organizing the development and manufacture of the linotype machine. It was perfected under his encouragement in the composing-room of The Tribune, and it was there first brought into effective use. In the period with which we are now concerned, another potent instrument, the telephone, was scarcely more than a wonder and a toy. A quicker adaptation of it to general use would have made a very practical difference in Reid's affairs. In the first years of his control of The Tribune, when he often worked eighteen hours a day, he was even then unwilling to lose touch with the paper for ten minutes, in a crisis. Accordingly, he had a bedroom fitted up in the tower. A telephone would have saved him that.

The tower points to another significant aspect of New York at that time. Steel-cage construction was unknown. The sky-scraper was undreamed of—until Reid laid the corner-stone of the Tribune Building in 1874. The Florentine campanile that he then lifted into the air gave his contemporaries what was, for them, a greater sensation than their descendants have received from Manhattan's tallest towers. Voyagers coming up the bay hailed it with astonishment, little imagining the formidable structures it foreshadowed. The sky-line it broke was that of an essentially flat, low-lying city. In Reid's eyes New York was not then precisely beautiful. So we may judge from the instructions he sent to Clarence

Cook in 1870, with a request for a series of architectural articles. "What I want," he wrote, "is first a crisp editorial on the prevailing lack of architectural taste in New York, the dreary miles of brown stone fronts, the worthlessness of brown stone as a material for building, the monstrosities given us by our wealthiest men." Then article after article was to be written, discussing the question of architecture in our cities generally, but particularly in New York. The "frightful example" was to be fearlessly pilloried, and suggestions for a rational architectural reform were to be made. I happen to know that he never thereafter lost his interest in the physiognomy of New York or his solicitude for its betterment. He kept The Tribune always stanch for public improvements and a steady supporter of the Municipal Art Commission, when that serviceable body came into being. I have known him to work as earnestly for the proper placing of a new statue as for the winning of an election, notably when the choice of a site for Saint-Gaudens's Sherman was at issue. But I shall not pretend that problems of this kind cost him, in the seventies, much sleep. He was otherwise occupied, and, besides, despite its ugliness, there was a good deal in that small, warm, homogeneous New York world to beguile any man into cheerfully taking it as he found it.

Its very smallness and homogeneity increased its welcoming warmth. The measure of its smallness may be drawn from the fact that he who journeyed to Union Square found himself emphatically "up-town." The Thirties and Forties were portentously high latitudes. Washington Square, serenely rebuking with its fine architectural survivals those brownstone fronts which Reid abhorred, was a sanctuary possessing a kind of remoteness. Only a stone's throw from Broadway, it yet preserved its ancient peace—for Broadway itself still had its Knickerbocker dignity. Fifth Avenue, save for its churches and a few public institutions, like old St. Luke's Hospital, was an avenue of homes, with trees along the curb. At its foot the Brevoort House had the quietude and stateliness of one of London's venerable "private hotels," and earned some of its high repute, in fact, as the favorite resort in New York of British noblemen on their travels. The Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, stayed there on his historic visit. I remember, far away, its vast, solemn rooms, its massive dining-tables, and the noiseless staff, all just going out of fashion to make way for the modern régime. Also I remember the food, savoring, like the rest, of tradition. The Brevoort wasn't always full of titled foreigners. New Yorkers of the old school frequented its conservative portals, as did, by the way, many of the political lights of that period. The latter went to the Astor House down-town when they wanted to be near the thick of things. The Brevoort was the place for unhurried confabulations. Amongst the restaurateurs the name of Delmonico led all the rest, though one could dine with Lucullus at more than one address in those simple days. In University Place, as sedate a thoroughfare as Washington Square itself, Solari's became pretty nearly historic, thanks to a perfect cuisine, a memorable wine-cellar, and the patronage of "Sam" Ward, Pierre Lorillard, and other authoritative gourmets. The "quick lunch" of latter-day New York had, it is to be presumed, its equivalent in the seventies; but Delmonico, not content to rule only within the limits of his domain up-town, ministered also in Chambers Street, and there were divers "chop-houses" in the business district which enjoyed, in their solid English way, as high a favor. I mention these adjuncts because they were not unimportant to an editor.

Greeley, no matter how busy, always had time for the amenities, and held many of his conferences at Delmonico's. Reid followed his example, meeting numbers of his professional engagements at the dinner-hour. He disposed of many others at home. When he came to The Tribune he settled in the Stuyvesant Square region, taking rooms in East Eighteenth Street, only a step from that oasis. In 1874, when Gavin's two daughters, his wards, were getting through with their education at boarding-school and he could plan to have them with him, he set up housekeeping at 23 Park Avenue, nearly a mile farther north. At both places, and later, when he took a house at 271 Lexington Avenue, it was his custom to rise late and at breakfast receive visitors. The tale of these appointments through the years discloses an endless procession of public figures. Statesmen from Washington looked in to talk about current legislation. Political leaders from all over the country discussed with him over the coffee their campaign plans, and editorial colleagues from as wide an area came to exchange ideas. Nor was it all business. Innumerable friends, not only political but military, literary, and "plain civilian," learned to drop in for breakfast, and made that institution one of the pleasantest as well as one of the usefulest of Reid's resources. Some of his most constant relations in those days, indeed, carry one far away from the grave world of editorial responsibility, into an atmosphere of pure frolic.

Hay, as I have indicated, was the gayest of companions, always ready for a day's—or an hour's—escape from the grind. He had his match, too, in their friend Seaver, William A. Seaver, who had had a taste of the publishing business, but whom the Fates had then translated into the presidency of a fire-insurance company. He was duly thoughtful to keep Reid's policies alive—

"to extract from us the value of your traps, in case of singe"—but that was a prosy matter and he was more eloquent when giving sound advice on claret. "I think you will enjoy hurling them into your noble person," he writes, with some bottles of Cusack, Grand Puy, and Lafitte. Seaver lived at Mount Vernon and liked to lure Reid up there. "I shall brew chowder with my own hands," he would promise. "We will take a drive, have music, tell jokes, talk constitution, and such." But his most characteristic missives are for casual interruptions of the down-town routine. "On Saturday next, at one hour, post meridian, come to Delmonico's, and have a small gorge. I expect Brady, Sam Cox, and one or two other swells, including that good young man Hay." And in another he seizes the jocund moment quite literally as it flies, in this fashion:

4.10 P.M.

DEAR REID:

Could you rub in a little food at 4½ P.M., at Del's? Nice food. I had a little windfall this morning and feel disposed to disseminate a vulgar fraction of it in a sweet little dinner. Giraud Foster is coming; nobody else.

Truly yours,

WILLIAM A. SEAVER.

The Brady expected at Seaver's "small gorge" was *the* Judge Brady, as Reid points out to Levi P. Morton on another cheerful occasion, a justice of the supreme court, but altogether a human brother, as evidenced by his own style of invitation: "My dear Reid; I have a little dinner of 6 tomorrow (if you come) at 7 P.M. Will you give me the pleasure of your countenance? The clams will wriggle at 19 West 33rd Street, which is my abode." Reid was one of the founders of the monthly dining-club which Morton invented in the seventies, and gave at the Union League the dinner which marked the first regular meeting of the little group. He had for his guests Clarkson N. Potter, Levi P. Morton, John Jay,

E. Randolph Robinson, Clarence King, William Henry Hurlbert, William M. Evarts, Judge Brady, Samuel D. Babcock, and James Gordon Bennett. The noted old merchant Royal Phelps, who did so much to secure the erection of the statue of Washington on the steps of the Sub-Treasury in New York, was another of Reid's close friends. He had a wonderful cellar, and, sometimes, when one of his own famous whist-parties kept him from coming to Reid's to dinner, he would send, as his ambassador, a bottle of priceless Madeira. In acknowledging one such gift, Reid writes: "Mr. Evarts and others were loud in its praises, and Mr. Tilden, not to be outdone, straightway sent around to his house for a bottle of marvellous Johannisberger of 1862. Between the two we sat around the table until half past eleven." Reid was no stranger to the city when he came to New York to live; he had a wide circle of friends to start with on his arrival. That circle increased in circumference with extraordinary rapidity; it grew like Jonah's gourd. He knew everybody, everybody knew him, and there were red-letter days on which he found a lifelong comrade. Such a date was his birthday, October 27th, 1871, when he first met William Walter Phelps. His earlier friends, the Bigelows, the Godwins, the Stones, the Bottas (presiding over the successfulest literary salon in New York annals), were ever faithful. Through these and other constantly multiplying ties he was identified more and more with the representative elements in the metropolis.

As a good Republican he had joined the Union League as early as 1868, but he was on clubable grounds with men of all parties—Evarts, Tilden, Hewitt, Choate, William C. Whitney, John Jacob Astor, Thurlow Weed, and so on. In 1870 Bayard Taylor proposed him at the Century, and he was elected in that year. In 1872, when the Lotos Club, then a very young organization, was rent by dissension, the predominant party looked around, outside the membership, for a likely leader, and fixed upon Reid. Proposed on April 30th and admitted May 16th, two days later he was unanimously elected president, and, as his old colleague in the club, Colonel Thomas W. Knox, once expressed it, "from that time onward there was no more disunion in the Lotos." Save for two years, when he declined re-election, he was amiably compelled to stay in office until the late eighties, a period, all told, of fourteen years. The literary and artistic associations of the Century were likewise characteristic of the Lotos, and at the junior club the ruling figures of the stage also foregathered—John Brougham, John Gilbert, Lester Wallack, "Billy" Florence, and their fellows. One great function of the Lotos, then as since, was the entertainment of distinguished guests, foreign and American. Reid, presiding over the banquets to which they were bidden, and making introductory speeches in their honor, considerably enlarged his scope in the recondite art of dealing with celebrities. His first lions, Kingsley, Froude, and Edmund Yates, kept him on familiar ground; but he had in time to tackle almost any theme, welcoming the explorer Stanley, the canal-builder De Lesseps, Lord Houghton, Wilkie Collins, Hans von Bülow, Henry Irving, Gilbert and Sullivan, and, on one romantic occasion, no less a potentate than his Majesty Kalakaua the First, King of the Hawaiian Islands. There was entertainment in these dinners and, incidentally, they brought him a repute for public speaking which was elsewhere confirmed.

In the spring of 1872 he was asked to lecture upon journalism at the University of the City of New York. His discourse,* widely reported in the press, was reproduced in "Scribner's Monthly," and then issued in book form. In the following year he delivered the commencement address at Dartmouth College, speaking on "The Scholar in Politics," and gave, in substance, the same paper at Amherst College and Miami University. This, also, from the extracts in the newspapers and the comment provoked, preliminary to its publication in "Scribner's," made his name increasingly familiar outside as well as inside New York. But the particular effect of all these activities was the conclusive affirmation of his citizenship. In the course of them he was established once and for all as a New Yorker. The public influence which he was coming to exert was matched by the private good-will that fell to his portion. People developed a warmly interested feeling for the dark-haired, handsome, brilliant editor rising in their midst, "the young man in the tall tower," as he was called. They liked his personality and his talk, and the intellectual appeal in the arresting quality of his journalism was made only the more sympathetic by the traits he revealed as a man. Reid's personal popularity at this time, the tenacious roots he struck down into the life of the city, must be reckoned amongst the signal facts of his career. A large part of the success which he won in that small, warm, dusky, homogeneous New York world of his, he won because he there raised up literally troops of appreciative friends.

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*See "American and English Studies," by Whitelaw Reid, New York, 1913, vol. II, pp. 193-344, for this and other papers on the subject.

He needed them, for solace, if for nothing else. Any strong man needs them when he takes his own line in public affairs and fights for it, making, as sure as the sun goes down, a horde of enemies, and an editor, of course, in the nature of things, can count upon his full quota. The attacks levelled against Reid in some sections of the press, bitter enough before the campaign of 1872, grew doubly venomous at that time. Quantities of the mud thrown at Greeley were aimed also at his lieutenant, and, in fact, Reid told Smalley that he thought he was getting much more than his fair share of blackguarding. Vigorous fighter as he was, he nevertheless could not retort in kind, and his letters reflect a constant worry over the problem, how much he longed to hit back and how resolutely he strove to adjust the hitting to his own decent sense of things. He thus exhibits his dilemma and his course:

New York, October 3rd, 1872.

My dear Mrs. Bigelow:

We are now, as you must see from the American papers, immersed in the hurly burly of the campaign, which is, I must say, more virulently and viciously personal than any I have yet seen. I made an heroic effort to conduct The Tribune on a judicial plane of impartial discussion for a long time, but the attacks upon our people were so wanton and so aggravated that it seemed necessary at last to retaliate by telling a small part of what we know concerning a number of the most prominent Federal officials. This made things lively and promises to make things livelier. For myself, I believe I am about the best hated man in New York. Mr. Murphy's grudge has been fed fat by time and diligent cultivation. Mr. Henry Clews, Collector Chester Arthur, Mr. Naval Officer Laflin and others are now taking their turn, and a lively time they are having of it. The whole business is distasteful to me, but I honestly believe we are right.

Gen. Dix [then Governor of the State] has thus far been as great a humbug as the steeple of Trinity Church. We propose to show that like it he is a wooden sham before we get through with him, and to make the people of New York believe it.

Always very truly yours,

Whitelaw Reid.

Mrs. John Bigelow,
Dresden, Germany.

To the political animosities indicated in this letter there were added enmities less easily explained. There were years, late in the lives of both, when Reid and Dana were on the friendliest of friendly terms. But in those early days, for no reason perceptible to the ordinary inquirer, Dana's abuse of his rival was diabolical.

I once asked a sagacious observer of the feud who knew them both if he could tell me anything about it, and he gave me an astounding reply. "I never could understand," he said, "how Dana could so pursue Reid. He was extraordinary in his malevolence. He had hatreds, queer hatreds, based on grounds unthinkable to any other human being. Thus he seemed to hate anybody succeeding him in the managing editorship of The Tribune. That was why he hated John Russell Young and Reid, and printed calumnies about them both!" The hatred passed, and was revived, and passed again, a fantastic mystery of human relations. But a generous amount of the opposition encountered by Reid had nothing mysterious about it at all, as his friends, at any rate, could see. Garfield bluntly puts his finger on the secret of the trouble when he says, in a letter of June 1st, 1872: "It is not surprising that your brilliant success on The Tribune has awakened envy and jealousy." Envy and jealousy were precisely what he awakened, in positive storms. To an interviewer, years ago, Reid once said, "I have never had anything that I did not work for," and he might justly have added, "or little that I did not fight for."

It would be a very false picture of him in the seventies that presented only his success, ignoring the almost daily efforts made by political and journalistic enemies to discredit his work and break him down. He laughed them to scorn, realizing, for one thing, that they could do him no harm. When Walter Phelps went to Congress and suffered the usual hard knocks, he told him not to worry. "Next to being the subject of discriminating praise," he wrote, "the best thing that can happen to a man is to be the subject of indiscriminating and violent abuse. The violence always leads people to think there must be something in the man who provokes it." With this philosophy he could laugh, as I have said, at his detractors. But he was not indifferent to criticism, and one instance may be cited here, though not so much for its own sake as for that of a collateral document. "Tell me honestly," he wrote to Watterson, in the heat of the campaign, "whether you think we are making The Tribune too political. I get alarmed about it sometimes, and yet I have people who complain that we don't print enough politics." Here is Watterson's reply:

Louisville, September 5th, 1872.

My dear Reid:

My dear boy! I read The Tribune every day carefully and I flatter myself that, if there is anything I *do* understand, it is a daily newspaper. Barring that your news editor misses some magnificent rebel-liberal campaign material, for New England consumption, that I now and then provide for your special benefit, I really can't see how you could improve the paper. Seriously, you may as well expect the kind of criticism to which you are exposed. That you are not up to Marble; that you are a failure; that the absence of Greeley is fatal, you may confidently look to hear. If you had twice Greeley's peculiar genius, and all your own, it would be still the same. The world does not allow a young buck like you to step into such a pair of boots without its word; and you know yourself that one must e'en have his feet pinched with every new pair of boots, particularly if they be a tight fit, as they are in your case, for that The Tribune is quite up to itself, that you are filling the measure as full as need be or can be, "I'm free to maintain." You are, indeed, and if White, Halstead or Bowles—to take the standards—*could* do better, they *don't* do better, and, for my part, I *couldn't* do better. Don't you bother about it, me boy!

Affectionately,

H. W.

Watterson's heartening words must have been very welcome, like balm bestowed amid hurtling missiles, and there were other friends, in and out of journalism, quick to give counsel and encouragement. Yet if the columns of The Tribune offer any criterion, Reid needed no consoling support—they glow with the joy of battle. That was one reason why his newspaper neighbors were so vexed with him—he gave back blow for blow with such gleeful zest. He had the energy to meet all their onslaughts and even had some to spare with which to speed the quarrel of a friend. It is interesting to find him, in one instance, the vigilant custodian of Godkin's good name. In the course of a disagreement on public affairs in 1872, the "Times" sought to confute the "Nation" by assailing its editor on personal grounds connected with old contributions of his to the "Times." Godkin framed a withering reply, sent it to The Tribune, withdrew it from publication on the advice of friends, but returned it the next day with the following:

New York, March 25th, 1872.

DEAR MR. REID:

I enclose you the letter once more, and shall feel obliged by your getting it in tomorrow if possible.

May I ask you one thing more? I am going out of town for ten days, being considerably run down in health. They will probably pitch into me daily, for a while, and I have no daily paper to reply in and shall not be here to look after myself, even if I had, and have done with the controversy forever. Would you, therefore, take care of me by an occasional shot, during my absence?

Yours very truly,
EDWIN L. GODKIN.

Reid began to take care of him by having his defense put in type within an hour of receiving it and sending him a proof; he printed it in the morning, and then, giving the "Times" the following day for the publication of a reply, he came out on March 28th with a terse exposure of the latter as an illustration of "unaccountable spite and perversity." It was swift, serviceable cooperation, from which Reid desisted only because Godkin himself asked to have the matter dropped. "As you were kind enough to back me up with a vigorous blast in The Tribune," he wrote, a few days later, "you will perhaps allow me to bore you with one or two words of explanation about the last article in the 'Times'"; but these were only for Reid's private ear, and Godkin would have no further parley with the enemy. Meanwhile, the episode served to cement the bonds between the two men, and in view of the antagonism in which political differences long afterward involved them, it is a little amusing to observe the amity in which they once dwelt. In the winter of 1875, for example, there was a London letter of Smalley's which, for certain reasons, was not exactly suitable for The Tribune. On the other hand, it seemed to Reid too good to be thrown away, and, in fact, just what the "Nation" would want. Whereupon he sent it over to Godkin, who told him when they met at the Century that he was very glad to get it. "I hope," wrote Reid to Smalley, "this may be the end of the bitter feeling between yourself and the 'Nation.' It is in many ways one of our most valuable friends here, and whatever may have been its attitude in the old times, it fights now for most of the things for which The Tribune fights, and goes largely into the same class of educated thoughtful men." Alas for that amiable hope! The end of the bitter feeling was not to be so easily brought about. Seasoned readers of The Tribune, of "G. W. S.," and of the "Evening Post," in Godkin's administration, readers who remember how the London correspondent was wont to excoriate "the Illustrious Immigrant," and how the New York editor poured out the vials of his wrath upon "the Old Tory Squire," will agree with me, I think, in the reflection that Godkin, publishing with pleasure an article of Smalley's, offers a delectable subject for an historical painting in the temple of journalism.

It was in the campaign of 1872 that Reid got a new sense of what the "bitter feeling" of political debate could produce in the way of personal abuse, and yet the close of the canvass, which should naturally have witnessed the burial of many hatchets, only sharpened them for more outrageous attacks. Colonel Watterson has told me of the wretched physical state in which Greeley made his last stand in the West. His speeches were magnificent, but his health was unmistakably breaking down. When Watterson sped him on his journey home he was never to see him alive again. The old warrior went back to tend his wife in her last days; she died on October 30th, and a month later he followed her. It was then that the storm broke over Reid's head, and he was embarked in dreadful earnest upon a sea of troubles.

There were jealous competitors of The Tribune who were mean enough to try to make capital for themselves out of the heavy loss it had sustained, and there were personal enemies of Reid's, of an even ignobler breed, who were ready with insinuations associating him with the causes of his chief's death. If he had not forced Greeley's nomination at Cincinnati, they said, Greeley would not have been crushed by defeat and the consequent ruin of The Tribune. If he had not edited and suppressed articles written by Greeley after the election, Greeley would not have died of a broken heart. And so on in the same edifying strain of silliness and malice. It was all wickedly made out of whole cloth, and, as Watterson said to me when we discussed the subject, no more wicked than absurd. Detraction so grotesque could not but defeat itself. Even men who had been no well-wishers of Reid's could see that. Among them was the editor of the "Commercial Advertiser," an opponent whose action at this crisis is perhaps as significant a tribute as I could cite. It took this shape:

New York, November 30th, 1872.

WHITELAW REID, ESQ.

Dear Sir:

You and I have travelled in different directions since your advent and mine into journalism in this city. I have said hard and mean things about you which were the ebullitions of the moment and which I regretted afterwards. You and I never have met that I am aware of. I should not know you if I stumbled on you in the street. I would not now be communicating with you but that I respect ability and pluck, and sympathize with the "under dog" in a fight. The article in the "Sun" of today was so cruel, so dastardly, that I could not resist offering you my sympathy, my humble pen, my assistance, to defend you against this sort of inhuman warfare. Because your side did not succeed I don't believe in hunting you down like a dog. I see that a systematic effort is to be made in that direction. Will you pardon my warm nature when I say that I can't stand by and see a man kicked when he is down. Command my poor services.

Yours to serve, HUGH HASTINGS.

Hastings was no squeamish amateur in the journalistic arena. What made *his* gorge rise had to be pretty strong. But Reid's course was clear. In thanking Hastings, he wrote, "I will have no wrangles with slanderers over Mr. Greeley's open grave," and, in a letter of similar import to Charles Dudley Warner, about the attacks, he explains that at least until after the funeral "there shall not be a line in The Tribune to indicate that we have even seen them." He would not even reprint articles appearing in other papers in his defense. After all, it was hardly necessary. Nobody who knew him, least of all those who knew him in his relations with Greeley, needed to be told of the scrupulous loyalty, nay, the tenderness, with which he watched over his friend and his friend's interests down to the end. He left the lies to perish of their own baseness. But now and then some one far from the scene would in good faith be bewildered by flying rumors, and to him Reid would make reply. Such an inquirer was Greeley's zealous supporter in Kansas, the old antislavery politician, William Larimer, of Leavenworth. Reid wrote to him as follows:

New York, March 11th, 1873.

DEAR SIR:

I am greatly obliged by your favor of the 6th inst. Of course the talk about anybody being responsible because of his [Greeley's] nomination for the Presidency is preposterous. For my own part I was opposed to his nomination up to within two weeks of the Cincinnati Convention, and again and again stated my grounds of opposition. When he finally told me that he wanted me to go to Cincinnati to represent him, and I undertook the work, I made up my mind as a matter of course to do my best for him. He wanted me there mainly to look after the tariff, and that I did. But I should have been an exceedingly poor friend of his if I had not also done the best I could for the nomination.

His death was not due to any political disappointment but almost entirely to the enormous overwork which, continuing for years, finally culminated in the tremendous strain of the trip West, and the return to his wife's death-bed, over which he watched almost sleepless for a month. No human frame could have borne what he then underwent. I am a living witness that he gave far less attention for weeks to the political situation than most of his friends, and that from the date of the Vermont election he had substantially made up his mind to the probability if not the certainty of defeat. They grossly slander and outrage his memory who falsely say that he died because of political disappointment.

Very truly yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

Hon. Wm. Larimer,
Leavenworth City, Kan.

In the month immediately following Greeley's death the emotional consequences of that event lost none of their dramatic character by the intervention of hard, practical issues. What was to become of the paper? The whole country may be said to have taken an interest in the question, with which the press resounded. The Tribune was, as Watterson whimsically styled it, a "stockocracy." When Greeley died he possessed only six of the one hundred shares in which the ownership was vested, but so long as he lived the fate of The Tribune was so bound up with his personality that in spite of the small number of his shares the determination of its policy hinged as a matter of course upon his decision. The moment he was gone the stockocracy brought divergent views to the front, and at its first meeting to consider the future it was confronted by a crucial question which Reid thus formulated: "Shall The Tribune abandon wholly the independent attitude which it won from the Cincinnati movement, and fall into the ranks of Republican organs behind the New York 'Times,' or shall it continue honestly as an independent newspaper, supporting what can be honestly approved in Gen. Grant's Administration, and as frankly opposing the rest?" The solution of this problem was, as I have said, more than a private interest; it was a public trust. Greeley had hardly been laid in his grave when letters poured in upon Reid, full of anxious inquiry, and imploring him to save the day. The intensity of feeling behind these pleas bursts all bounds in the case of one faithful reader, who had heard a prophecy that the paper would now go to eternal smash. "For God's sake, Mr. Reid," urges this alarmed correspondent, "make that man a liar!" To do that he had to combat a movement to make Schuyler Colfax editor, an appointment not only inept in itself but one promising the triumph of Conkling and his associates and the handing over of The Tribune to the administration, lock, stock, and barrel.

The man who has served as Speaker of the House, and twice been re-elected to that office, surely need not apologize for his abilities, and ex-Vice-President Colfax doubtless seemed in many quarters a very desirable choice, indeed, for the editorship of The Tribune. But, as a matter of fact, not even such modest success as he had won editing his St. Joseph Valley "Register" out at South Bend could persuade anybody who knew anything about journalism to believe that he could fill Greeley's chair. Some commentators were purely horror-struck. "It is not true, I trust," wrote Halstead, "that the editorship of The Tribune is tendered Colfax. That would be ruin and disgrace." But chiefly the welkin rang with ridicule. Here is a specimen:

Hartford, Dec. 10th, 1872.

Dear Mr. Reid:

I have asked Mr. Osgood to send you and Col. Hay, with my compliments, copies of the "Back Log." I do not hold you responsible for the part of it that is new, but you certainly advised the rest of it.

Why don't you get for editor of The Tribune, Victoria, or Plon Plon, or ex-Napoleon III, or Kossuth, or the Equator, or Daniel Pratt, or the Milky Way, or the Committee of Seventy, or Weed's Sewing Machine, or the Ten Commandments, or the Multiplication Table—something that is well known in and has the confidence of the back districts? I hope the Lord will give me to see the day when a good newspaper will command itself.

Yours sincerely,
Charles D. Warner.

John Defrees, Lincoln's old public printer, summed up the general feeling about the whole unbelievable business when he wrote to Reid from Washington: "Well, all I have to say of it is, that it is a very silly effort to fill a very great void by the insertion of a very small cork." Reid, himself, remained "Smiler's" kindliest critic. "There is this to be said about Colfax," he wrote to Bayard Taylor, "that he has always surprised people in every position he has obtained by doing better than they expected." Still, he had to add that letters of protest past counting were coming in from leading Republican statesmen, of all regions in the country, and that even the Grant newspapers were firing hot shot into the new combination. At the height of the crisis he came to know the full value of those troops of friends we have seen him making. They rallied round him with whole-hearted offers of immediate aid, and in the office he was surrounded by the same affectionate loyalty. When Reid resigned Hay resigned with him, and virtually the whole staff was eager to take the same course. He had strenuously to reason with some of his men to keep them from sacrificing their own interests to their personal devotion. For his own part, he went back to the motto of his youth, which the reader may recall: "Always look on the bright side, if there is any." The axiom held true, and when, after days of suspense, he retained the editorship, the office floor was littered with torn-up resignations. The happy event fell in the happiest of seasons, only a day or two before Christmas. Reid spent part of December 24th writing letters to his lieutenants, raising their salaries, and bidding the staff to a banquet at Delmonico's on the 28th.

"Hurrah for our side!" cried Walter Phelps, one of the stanchest of his numerous adherents, and in all the letters of congratulation that swept in upon him the same note was sounded. Horace White's words of rejoicing were all for "your triumph over the powers of darkness." Mark Twain's accustomed levity disappears beneath his solemn sense of the rescue of principle that had been compassed. "My dear Reid," he writes, "the Lord knows I grieved to see the old Tribune wavering and ready to tumble into the common slough of journalism, and God knows I am truly glad you saved it. I hope you will stand at its helm a hundred years." Bigelow hailed him as even more the editor for the situation than his great predecessor would have been. "I can see better reasons than the others," he wrote from Paris, "for thinking that any change that should result from a reaction against your administration of The Tribune would prove disastrous to it and injurious for a time—unjustly so—to you. The prospects of your paper now seem to me as good as possible after what has occurred. You know I have long thought that The Tribune has suffered rather than gained for many years from Greeley's influence upon it, fully as I recognize some of his marvellous talents for journalism. It is admirably managed now and must rapidly heal any wounds it received during the late campaign." Bret Harte, whose pen Reid had been seeking just as the storm broke, called to speak his good-will face to face, and, finding his friend absent, wrote this graceful note:

> Sturtevant House,
> December 30th, 1872.
>
> MY DEAR REID:
>
> My visit last Friday was only one of congratulation—only to say how glad I was that the King should enjoy his own again—that the true Prince should hold his own against all Pretenders, and to drink confusion to all rebels and crop-eared time-servers. Of course with my facile promptness I say "Yes" to your proposal. But pray believe me in spite of this. I really want to connect myself in ever so humble a fashion with The Tribune, which after this sore travail really seems to have been born again, and to promise all that I, in my younger newspaper days, used to dream of as my ideal of journalism. So look for me, with slips, before long, when the year is new. If this hand hath not lost its cunning—but I'll say no more.
>
> Yours ever,
> BRET HARTE.

Nothing was more welcome than a letter like this, which contained not only cheer but the promise of "copy." All through the period of stress Reid had, of course, gone on editing, and now his labors were doubled, involving not only those of editor but those of publisher as well, and one of his tasks, as he wrote to Bigelow, was to bring the business department up out of "a horrible state of chaos." He chose this moment, also, to make the resolution that on the 1st of May they would begin tearing down the old building, so as to put up on its site the best newspaper office in the country. "Yes, I see you won," wrote Halstead, "and I almost felt sorry for you when you did. It's a devilish long rough road—fighting through and paying out after your long-time old leader is dead is what brings a fellow's gray hairs. But it's worth the gray hairs and the rest, I suppose." He was not the only one to see the magnitude of Reid's task and to warn him. His friends were always begging him to take care of himself, to work less inordinately. But Walter Phelps, a constant mentor, showed in one of the earliest of his many remonstrances how well he understood the futility of argument on this point. "If it were any use," he says, "I would preach to you upon the necessity of your working less. But I know it is of no avail. Like a tiger that has tasted blood, you know the zest that comes from power and that power can be had only by working harder than others, and so you will work on, until you drop." Pinned to a letter of Jay Cooke's, written at this time, there is a faded clipping from a New York paper, describing "Whitelaw Reid's tall, muscular figure, clad in a long surtout far below the knee, wearing a Scotch cap, his long hair brushed back, and his eyes closed with weariness, going home in the Third Avenue cars at one, two or three o'clock in the morning." It was the last detail that moved the old Philadelphia banker to admonish his friend. "Don't do this kind of thing," he implores. But it was only by doing this kind of thing that he could satisfy his conception of what was due to the situation.

Doubtless it was pleasant to have the solicitude of his friends. It was pleasant, too, and perhaps even more fortifying to receive, shortly after Cooke's adjuration, such a message as this from Godkin: "Let me take this opportunity of congratulating you sincerely on The Tribune, which is, in my judgment, by long odds, the best newspaper that has ever been here, and I trust you may have the patience to persevere in your present course, and that the Lord will in some manner remove that amazing blackguard in the 'Times' office."

The concluding passage in Godkin's tribute reminds us of the crumpled rose-leaf that is never missing, for any man. His enemy, and Reid's, in the "Times" office was in nowise silenced by the turn taken in the affairs of The Tribune. On the contrary, he continued his animadversions, and there were others in the press, of his acidulated disposition, who were as unremitting in their industry. But as in private Reid had his goodly band of sworn followers, so in public there was no lack of defenders. I might, from many sources, here frame a kind of composite portrait, revealing Whitelaw Reid as he appeared to his contemporaries in the hour of his establishment in editorial control of The Tribune. Better than that, however, is the sketch drawn by a journalist, J. C. Goldsmith, who was competent to delineate him, and in the process was bent not upon eulogy but upon justice. From his brief study of Greeley and Reid I take these passages:

> Life was to Greeley like the breeze that plays upon an Aeolian harp. Where Greeley hesitated, Reid pushes. Greeley discussed premises; Reid insists on the undeniableness of his conclusions. He cares nothing for the passing rhetorical effects of his sentences, provided he wins. The pail may be red or yellow; but does it hold water? He is indefatigable. This man—keen, cool, judicious, strategical, unflinching—has not the slightest doubt that the problem of guiding The Tribune through the many years to come has been solved by him. He has a firm reliance on his own strength, and he asks no man to confirm it. In his management he is as much like Barnes of the London "Times" as anybody.
>
> This is the man Reid as he prominently appears at first sight. His executive ability is so great that you are likely to forget that his other qualities in journalism are by no means dwarfed. They are merely subordinated. Men have been fond of saying that Reid is very like Greeley. With great love for the memory of the one and great admiration for the abilities of the other, we suggest that this estimate is not strictly correct. In Greeley sentiment was predominant, and the only so-called errors that the dear old man ever committed were the effects of his sentiment at white heat. We will not call them errors, because they were caused by great faith in ideas without regard for the ways of the world. Reid has sentiment, but it is kept in command, and he is able to calculate the time when ideas may have the greatest effect. This is the historical faculty. Greeley's was that of a poet. We can easily see why he admired Reid. Reid was what he was not—practical in his sagacity. No

one believes that he would have made him his lieutenant for that quality alone, or that a man so warm in his tastes and affections as Greeley was should have selected as his nearest acquaintance one whose sentiments were rigidly cold. Reid is eminently a genial, companionable man, and his friendships with men like Chase, Garfield and Hay are very close and sincere. But it is in the management of his paper that we do not see the traits of character that belong to a man who is the foster-father of orphans and whose charities are as broad as the principles of his journalism. The management of The Tribune could show nothing but intellect. Saladin carving the floating veil can hardly show the heart that is in him. So that we must consider Reid as a cool, keen, sagacious, politic man, while we come to know that The Tribune is now displaying better morning journalism than any other paper on the two continents.

In the letter of acknowledgment that Reid wrote to the author of the foregoing there is a sentence characteristic of that sentiment to which Mr. Goldsmith refers: "Four-fifths of all the praise The Tribune gets belongs first of all to its splendid staff." He ruled it, as he had from the first moment in which Greeley had placed authority in his hands, with consideration and generosity. But there was no doubt at all about his ruling. Nor did the legend which he proudly affixed to the paper, "Founded by Horace Greeley," the sign manual of a fidelity in which he never wavered, in one whit affect his course in making The Tribune the expression of his own ideas. Thenceforth, in every detail that determines a paper's character, stamping it as the work of one man's guiding genius, the instrument of his thought and influence, The Tribune was Whitelaw Reid's.

It is important to note here, however, one far-reaching trait underlying Reid's dominance. I have spoken of our era of "personal journalism." He easily held his own against its fierce and often even violent competition, and a question that naturally presents itself is the question of just how he spoke his mind in a debate carried on by men like Greeley and Bowles, Dana and Watterson. Greeley, for example, was a kind of modern Bunyan, whose personality fixed the color of his paper in a peculiarly decisive way. The Tribune was for him a pulpit from which the doctrines that he preached took on an accent absolutely his own. Readers turned to the paper every morning wondering "what Uncle Horace would say." Something like this was the habit of Dana's followers and of other devotees of other guides. It was not in quite the same sense the habit of those who believed in Whitelaw Reid and were aware, into the bargain, of his sufficiently affirmative personality. Where he was concerned, rather, the public wondered "what The Tribune would say." His influence was recognized, if I may make the distinction, not as that of an oracular editor, but as that of an editorial oracle. His secret was one of organization. His closest prototype is Delane, in the most powerful days of the London "Times," when everybody was aware of his power behind the editorial columns, but no one could identify in detail his relation to the writing of a given editorial. Reid's contribution, in short, to "personal journalism" was a kind of editorial management which sacrificed individual idiosyncrasy to the weight of the paper as an institution greater than any member of its staff. He lost nothing of personal fame by this subordination of his gifts as a writer to his gifts as an editor. He had a style, a style in which Hay and other friends of his exulted, recognizing his touch when it appeared. But he sought no salience for it. He was content that his spirit should be merged, for the world at large, in the spirit of The Tribune.

CHAPTER XVI

"THE SCHOLAR IN POLITICS"

General Grant settled down to his second administration with a majority behind him which, considered as a vote of confidence, rang ominously hollow. It would seem natural to assume that the people, in re-electing him, showed that they loved Greeley less, yet it would hardly be accurate to say that they loved Grant more. It was a case, rather, of their having made a rough-and-ready bid for what looked to them like the more practicable way out of a state of political muddle—and, as sometimes happens in a matter of specious compromise, they were incontinently sold. The President was re-inaugurated while the embers of the Crédit Mobilier investigation were still burning hot, and he took with him into his new tenure of the White House a rich share of the odium attaching to the quite as detestable "salary grab." These episodes were prophetic. They foreshadowed his further bedevilment of civil service reform, his Laodicean handling of the currency issue, his more than inept Southern policy, and the culmination of his errors in the Third Term heresy. What a chance was here, ready to the hand of an editor whose columns were now conclusively given to a programme of independence! For it was a chance offered not only by the declension of a great soldier into a poor president, but by the existence of a thoroughly national state of discontent. There was no narrow partisanship in the anti-Grantism which marked Reid's conduct of The Tribune at this time. On the contrary, it was a whole-souled, disinterested revolt against corrupt party domination that he carried on, and in this he soon had, in his turn, a rousing majority behind him, one which, unlike the President's, rang auspiciously true.

It was his popular backing, as well as his own temperament, that saved him in his independence from the holier-than-thou tendencies of the Mugwump. He upheld what he called "the sacred right of bolting and scratching," not as a fetich, but as the practical resource forced upon honest men by actual conditions. A type of editorial frequently recurring in The Tribune during this administration is one philosophizing current events in the political world. The State conventions which turn up with such appalling frequency in American life could be relied upon to supply the necessary theme. They were not always to be taken seriously, it is true, and least of all was there any sustenance in the sawdusty comments of these assemblies on the shortcomings of the administration. "There's hardly anything in the machinery of politics so cheap as resolutions," was Reid's cynical reflection on what the oracles generally had to say. But there was no mistaking their fundamental restlessness, and the mounting evidence of the news columns gave him a basis for the following characteristic diagnosis:

> It would be hard to find in the history of the country any parallel for the present political conditions. If it is not chaos now, it is the beginning of it. Never sat party allegiance so lightly before; never was the dictum of the caucus so weak, or the sanctity of the regular nomination so lightly regarded. The party in power has, from all present appearances, the best of it; but we are much mistaken if all these signs do not portend mischief for it as well as for the other organizations; and perhaps for the great and good men who make their living by controlling them.

This passage points, like innumerable others of the same tenor which I might draw upon, to the close connection between Reid's policy and the drift of the times. The deeper elements of his political thought are expressed in the address on "The Scholar in Politics," which, as I have previously noted, he gave at more than one university in the summer following the national election. It won warm approval at Amherst and Miami, and Dartmouth emphasized its appreciation by conferring upon him the degree of Master of Arts; but what gave Reid the most satisfaction was the assurance of his friends, in and out of the press, that he had spoken constructively to the needs of the hour. These he recognized as the needs of an altogether new and different state of affairs. The age of the sentimental in politics had passed. We had ceased to conduct campaigns on fine feelings. Emotional politics had gone out with the war. Questions of God-given rights had made way for others having to do with the tariff on pig iron and with rates of mileage. The right of the black man to the free air of heaven had been forever settled, and now it was time to tackle the knottier problem of keeping him from reducing South Carolina to bankruptcy. And all this required not emotion but hard thinking, the best service of the best-trained men:

> Anybody could understand sentimental politics; it takes thought and training, and all the scholarship you can get for it, to master the more difficult issues of this more critical time. On mere questions of justice to the enslaved or loyalty to the flag, there was no fear of the people; with or without the active co-operation of their best-taught men, they were sure to take the right course. But the issues that are now upon us are as grave and more complicated. How to efface the scars of a civil war; how to preserve safe relations between slaves suddenly made citizens and masters suddenly made paupers; how to repair the financial waste of an inflated currency and an enormous debt; how best to adjust the burdens of an exhausted revenue to the needs of struggling industries; how to protect labor from capital, and how to control the corporations that absorb and dominate both,—these are problems worthy the best thought of our

> best-trained thinkers; and in handling them a government of the people has the right to the aid of the finest culture and highest intellectual power that people has been able to develop.
>
> We deplore the evils of politics. Our tastes are offended by their turmoil, our morals outraged by their deceit and dishonesty. They are coarse, they are vulgar, they are demoralizing, they are degrading. It is all true; and all the more it is your duty to go into politics! The man who complained of his termagant wife that there was no living with her or without her, was the exact type of the American scholar who stands outside the political arena, daintily sniffing at the odors of the struggle and wondering how he can get beyond their reach. That is just what he cannot do. He must suffer the errors of an ignorant policy, or he must help to shape a wise policy. He must permit the less intelligent to govern, or he must bring intelligence to the affairs of government.

That fling at the too fastidious observer of political life shows how far removed his independence was from the cold-blooded aloofness of Mugwumpery. In pleading for an intellectual leadership of the radicals, he pleaded, above all things, for practical good sense, for actual freedom as well as theoretical liberty of thought, for candid consideration of every question on its individual merits, for fairness to antagonists, and a willingness to hear the other side. Nevertheless, his few damning words on the evils of politics were spoken with peculiar feeling. As he was just then observing them, they were enough to discourage the most resolute of scholars in politics.

Reid's characterization of the re-elected President's inaugural clearly expresses both his critical attitude and his readiness to give support when he could do so. "It is the utterance of a man of the best intentions profoundly desirous to govern wisely and justly, and profoundly ignorant of the means by which good government is secured." Has any better epitaph on Grant's two administrations ever been written? "He promises," the leader continues, "little but what we heartily approve

—little but what The Tribune will sustain during the coming term with its usual energy, no matter what the President may do." In the meantime it was impossible to ignore the openings offered for attack upon Republican misconduct. When the insinuating Mr. Oakes Ames, the "Chicopee foundryman" of John Russell Young's vigilant satire, went divagating around Congress, placing his Crédit Mobilier shares where they would do the most good for the Union Pacific Railroad, he concocted about as nasty a bolus as any political party has ever had to swallow. Reid watched its workings with a pitiless eye. One bright spot there was for him in the inquest upon the scandal, the complete exoneration of Blaine, but nowhere else could he find occasion for anything but scorn. Throughout the investigation his columns rang with reprobation of the whole disgusting circle, and long after the official inquiry had been wound up he kept its history alive, a blister upon the back of the party. Some of the sins of the administration he was content to bring home to the door of the White House, notably Grant's weakness for the notorious Boss Shepherd, presiding genius of the ring fastened upon the District of Columbia, and it was Grant, too, whom he regarded as chiefly responsible for the injection of federal bayonets into the settlement of disputed elections in Louisiana, and, in fact, for the entire political misery of that State, of Arkansas, and of South Carolina. But those episodes were, after all, but episodes, certain to be corrected in the rehabilitation of the South. The battle which of all those he fought in this period stands out as most important in itself, and the one in which he rendered the greatest service, was the battle for a purified currency. There both Grant and his party were long in the same boat.

Editorials on the subject of the currency made an almost daily part of the fare put before readers of The Tribune. Reid had been printing them long before John Sherman made his memorable speech in the Senate in January, 1873, and thenceforth they became even more numerous. The ugly situation in our finances, inimical as it was to a stable prosperity, was doubly humiliating in morals. Stricken France shamed us. With her wounds still bleeding, she went heroically about the resumption of specie payments. No sooner had she paid off the last instalment of her staggering indemnity to the German invader, than she took steps to get the Bank of France back upon the right metallic basis. We, with an unquestionable superiority to France in the number and aggregate income of inhabitants, in resources, and in power to sustain taxation, nevertheless lagged far longer after our Civil War, content with a Sahara of paper. Grant's contribution to the sorry plight of the United States in this matter consisted in the first place in a plentiful lack of financial genius, and, secondly, in his familiar awkwardness where the choice of cabinet officers was concerned. Boutwell, his original secretary of the treasury, was surely no Colbert, and his next appointee, William A. Richardson, was a far less presentable minister. Richardson, blithely free-handed in the issuance of greenbacks, was not merely unaware of the future, he was well behind the times in which he lived, and Reid was wont to scarify his "deadness" as an oracle on money. Compared with him indeed, in the matter of having a vital spark, "the late Julius Cæsar is in the din of youth, walking Broadway with a spring style hat on and a green cotton umbrella under his arm." When that was written, by the way, the poor secretary was on the eve of leaving the post which he so slenderly adorned, and under his successor, Bristow, there seemed the prospect of better things. Besides, in the course of the developments leading up to this change of functionaries, Grant had given signs of reformation. Sherman's appeal, and the speeches of men like Schurz, W. W. Phelps, and Fenton, had made an impression upon him. He vetoed the bill of the inflationists which had been put through despite their efforts, and Reid applauded him with confidence in the early dawning of success. "He merits this morning," The Tribune declared of the President, "the thanks of Congress no less than those years ago when he defended the country against the assaults of a no more dangerous enemy." Grant's subsequent handsome profession of faith in the gold standard, embodied in his celebrated memorandum to Senator Jones, of Nevada, seemed to Reid as meritorious a performance as the Vicksburg campaign. The President was at last, and, it was to be presumed, permanently, on the right track. In arresting the insane down-hill legislation which spelled only more and more paper, he was making glorious atonement for all his blunders. But this flattering picture of him was to pass like a mirage. Congress had been working, ever since the veto, on a compromise; the makeshift measure tinkered together had, significantly, the solid support of the whole body of inflationists in both Houses, and to Reid's benumbing astonishment Grant accepted it. His comment on the news—"The lion's skin drops off; the President has signed the inflationists' bill"—gives well enough the measure of his bitterness, which could suffer no abatement through the few crumbs of consolation left in the affair. He went on with the fight, and when victory was ultimately secured he could claim to have helped appreciably in the winning of it. In the interim he could not but feel a deep discouragement. He no longer could hope that Grant would make any really serviceable move in the matter.

The faculty for disappointing his fellow countrymen which belonged to our famous soldier-President comes persistently into the foreground of even so circumscribed a survey as mine must be of the period now under review in Reid's career. It reacted everywhere, alike in what has been aptly termed "Rebellion's purgatory," the long-drawn-out reconstruction of the South; in the maladministration of federal offices, and in the ramifying influence of the White House upon State campaigns. The whole party fabric seemed tinctured with the same evil. Few things that the Republican organization touched were not the worse for the contact. Even the beggarly little Modoc war had to be mismanaged, one more symptom of "the vacillation, the capriciousness and hesitation, which have characterized the dealings of the Government with the Indians generally." Reid's independent policy and his unremitting labor in opposition are certified as sound and for the public good nowhere more emphatically than by the bald record of the proceedings on which he kept melancholy watch. On the other hand, that record was not altogether barren of reassuring passages, and in faithful redemption of his promise to give support when he could Reid was so helpful in his treatment of one of them as actually to win the warm if judiciously unofficial thanks of the administration. This occurred in the fall of 1873, when Spain was struggling with the Cuban insurrection, and embroiled herself with the United States by her capture of the *Virginius*, and her atrocious execution of certain of the prisoners she then took. The popular pressure was instantly for extreme measures, and at the outset, impelled by a not unnatural scepticism as to Grant's diplomacy, Reid bent his efforts toward stiffening the backbone of Secretary Fish. Soon perceiving, however, that the latter was shaping a firm course, he threw the full weight of The Tribune's influence upon the side of the administration's policy.

Whether Spain had strained the right of seizure or not was a point important to be looked into before drastic action could be taken. When filibustering is toward, the government threatened must be given every opportunity to present its case. Castelar was having trouble enough in his effort to establish republican principles in Spain, and he deserved the chance to at least show his good intentions respecting a country with which he was known to be, personally, in lively sympathy. All these points Reid advanced with constant emphasis upon the advantage which tact has over violence. When the news was received of the revolting slaughter of American citizens in Santiago, as the result of a farcical court martial, The Tribune pressed for complete satisfaction. But not even this outrage could weaken Reid's steady protest against recognition of the Cuban belligerents and against other heated, short-sighted proposals. He cheerfully served as one of the vice-presidents of the Steinway Hall mass-meeting, held to denounce Spanish lawlessness. He would not adopt the idea then current in the country that the time had arrived for annexation of the island so long tormented by oppression and revolt. Some interesting germs of the point of view and policy which he was to advocate as a peace commissioner after our war with Spain, twenty-five years later, are to be found in his editorials of 1873. Sooner or later Cuba was bound to be lost to Spain. It would be lost under circumstances discreditable to the Spanish Government. Cuba would gain her independence through foreign intervention. As for annexation, it seemed inevitable, but he did not share the general desire for it. "We should infinitely prefer a free confederation of the West Indies, under the protectorate of the United States, if necessary." There is a curiously prophetic ring about many of his sentences on this subject. One immediate effect that they had was greatly to smooth Fish's path, bringing public opinion to support the peaceful negotiations that led to apology and indemnification. Following the surrender of the *Virginius* to the naval representatives of the United States, this brief but eloquent correspondence between the secretary of state and Reid ensued:

Personal.
Unofficial.

Department of State,
Washington,
December 22nd, 1873.

Whitelaw Reid, Esq.
Dear Sir:

Justice and gratitude alike impel me to express to you my appreciation of the cordial and generous support which you have given to my efforts, under circumstances of much difficulty, to uphold at the same time the dignity and honor of the nation, and assert rights which cannot be waived, and to maintain the peace of the country.

That our paths, in the political contests of the country, for some short time past, have not been in exactly parallel lines, gives additional value to the kind expressions you have used, and to the support which the great influence of your journal has given.

Accept, I pray you, my thanks with my best wishes for many happy returns of the season.

With much respect,
Very truly yours,
Hamilton Fish.

New York,
December 29th, 1873.

The Hon. Hamilton Fish,
Secretary of State, U. S.
Dear Sir:

I am gratified that the efforts of The Tribune throughout the late Spanish difficulties, to defend the national interest and honor, have elicited the appreciation expressed in your courteous note.

We have in the main supported your policy in this deplorable *Virginius* business, because it seemed to us just, sagacious and dignified—worthy every way of a nation strong enough to protect its flag anywhere, but too strong to make war hastily, or on other than imperative grounds.

Nor have we failed to recognize that you have consistently adhered to the policy in every critical period, when mere politicians might be stealthily whispering that another course would better subserve the political fortunes of the Administration, whose chief officer and support you are.

In the sincere hope that the future may afford us many opportunities for applauding your statesmanlike conduct of the foreign affairs of our country, and with the sincerest good wishes of the season, I am, with much respect,

Very truly yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

There were other reasons why the *Virginius* episode left its mark upon the annals of The Tribune. Associated with it was a tragic mystery, the death of the paper's Cuban correspondent, Ralph Keeler. In the pursuit of his duties he took a steamer from Santiago to Havana, and on the voyage disappeared. The current belief was that he was murdered and the body then thrown overboard, but the secret of his loss has never been discovered. Keeler was one of a staff which did splendid work in the *Virginius* affair. From the beginning The Tribune's despatches were the fullest printed in the American press, and it was the only paper to have a representative at those ceremonies with which Spain turned over the ship that had caused all the trouble. Reid underlined the fact with pardonable pride. Recalling The Tribune's famous reports of Antietam, Woerth, and Sedan, its unique promptitude in supplying details of the great Ville du Havre disaster, and its recent exploit in beating the government by full forty-eight hours in news of an Indian fight on the Yellowstone, he thus linked the paper's newest feat with its old tradition: "Yesterday morning our special despatches gave to President Grant, Mr. Fish and the rest of mankind the only account yet received of the surrender of the *Virginius* at Bahia Honda."

The returns from management of this kind were swift and inspiriting. When Reid wrote to Smalley about his obtaining control, and spoke of his election to the editorship for five years, he added: "In that time I hope to make The Tribune worth a million and a half and to assure its position as leader in the journalism of one continent if not of two." From the start fortune smiled upon his ambition, partly because he was unquenchably sanguine about it. His letters breathe nothing but confidence. General Ashley had noticed that he looked pale and careworn in the presidential campaign, and wrote to warn him against overexhaustion. "My friends are all talking in the same way about my health," Reid replied, "but to me it seems better than for years past. Mere hard work never hurts me, and I am past the worries and cares which used to be so distracting. The Tribune is doing well financially." The crashes in Wall Street that year left him unscathed. In a midwinter letter to Smalley he observed that there had been no time either during the panic or since that the paper had not more than paid expenses. His pride in this was not lightly to be trifled with, and there is entertainment in an episode of his correspondence in 1874, when he got wind of some strange gossip in Philadelphia reflecting upon the financial stability of The Tribune. The staid editor of the "Ledger," Mr. G. W. Childs, was indicated as the source of these rumors, whereupon Reid "went for" his old friend with a kind of bland ferocity. He would pay the editor of the "Ledger" a hundred dollars for one on any bill whatever which, since his control of The Tribune, had been a second time presented. He got back the warmest possible protestations of innocence and good-will. "What a great and glorious journal you are making," he was told. The Tribune was simply, in the opinion of Mr. Childs, one of the best papers the country had ever had, and before that admiring colleague got through he was asking Reid for his photograph, to be put in a frame and hung beside the portrait of Greeley in the offices of the "Ledger."

There is nothing like a self-respecting alertness to keep indiscreet hands off the gilt on your gingerbread. It was a trait of Reid's to see that nobody who innocently or otherwise misrepresented The Tribune was left, through want of admonition, to do it a second time. "The paragraph referred to was obviously wrong, and I am sorry for it. I will see that nothing of the sort occurs again." An amende like that was a good deal to extract from a man like Horace White, and, in fact, Reid hated to ask for anything like it from his old comrade of the Quadrilateral. But if the "Tribune" of Chicago would permit itself to be inaccurate in its allusions to The Tribune of New York, it simply had to be corrected. Still, these occasions for setting critics right about the paper were few in number, compared with the incidents of encouragement spontaneously occurring. It would never have done if I reproduced all the messages of good-will that reached Reid, but now and then these tributes are a shade too interesting to be ignored. Witness this one from the renowned preacher of that epoch, full of his fun, as yet untouched by tribulation:

Twin Mountain House, N. H.
August 13th, 1873.

Whitelaw Reid, Esq.

Dear Sir:

Did you ever have the Hay Asthma? It is a tragedy. No man sh'd die without trying it. It requires a complex, multiform patience —one sort for the head, another for the throat, and another for all the way down. The remedy is found by coming to this charming Twin Mountain House. Here am I and my sister, and my three boys, but not The Tribune. I enclose therefore one dollar for a month's reading. Up here a dollar means more than in New York. It took me half a day to earn mine. (I picked a man's pocket for it.) By spending it for your paper, wh' I shall lend, after reading, the moral equilibrium will be restored—a la Tweed—and the broken commandments repaired.

Yours truly, H. W. Beecher.

Some of the criticisms bestowed upon him were funny, too; notably those emanating from his free-trade monitors. David A. Wells, a frequent and peculiarly welcome contributor on economic topics, was fairly comic in his distress over the obstinacy of his friend. It was comforting, no doubt, to liberate in The Tribune his wrath over evil doings in the Custom House, but it was anguish to have to steer clear of the tariff allusions which he longed to make. To talk about fiscal reform and leave out the iniquity of protection was as though a theologian were to preach the necessity of redemption and ignore the evidence of sin. He was sure that Reid would have to come over into the free-trade fold. "While I would not counsel you to abandon Protection all at once in The Tribune," he writes with patient consideration, "yet it must be evident to you that the day for all such stuff is rapidly passing, and that neither you nor The Tribune can expect to receive the support of the most intelligent minds in the country as long as you are bound to any such dead carcass." What extraordinary vitality has persisted in that carcass! Reid only went on teasing. He knew then, as he knew long thereafter, during the years through which he kept his paper on the even keel of a protective tariff, that in this matter he had the laugh on Wells. Meanwhile, free-traders and protectionists alike were faithful to The Tribune. Wells was glad to continue writing for it. And a free-trader like W. C. Whitney would be moved to write to the editor: "There is no comparison between your paper and the rest."

In the making of it Hay was a great help at this time, writing brilliant editorials on foreign politics and proving at every point a well-spring of inspiriting comradeship. He was on the watch for those special contributors through whom Reid always liked to strengthen his columns. "Castelar writes to me wanting to write a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly 'review' for The Tribune. Do you think you want it, and if so how much?" In a longer, later letter there is a passage about meeting "two of the most interesting people I have ever seen in my life"—Laurence Oliphant and his wife. "It is a combination I have never seen before, the highest knowledge of society and the world, combined with a mystic and passionate philosophy. He talked to me in a way that indicated he would like to write occasionally for The Tribune. I think it might be worth while to ask him." Hay's infectious liveliness, always bubbling up, became immeasurable after the blissful event of his engagement to Miss Stone. "I would not have died before this happened for a great deal of coin," he confided to Reid, and when the latter is off on a vacation at Cedarville he sends him news of the office keyed to the same glad pitch. The world was wrong, on points, but the paper was all right. "There will be plenty of horrible mistakes made, but no one will know it and when you come back you can turn everybody out." In a postscript: "I saw also Nilsson last night, who is prettier than ever and asked affectionately after you." I cannot turn too often to souvenirs of the affectionate atmosphere of those days. They are very numerous and very significant of a vein of lightness gratefully relieving Reid's daily tussle with the hard stuff of politics. In his correspondence with Watterson, for example, politics could hardly ever be avoided, yet they couldn't keep down the brilliant Southerner's inimitable effervescence. When he got back from a European journey in the fall of 1873 he wickedly stole away home without looking in on his New York cronies. To Reid's reproaches on this perfidy he replied:

Louisville,
September 9th, 1873.

My dear Reid:

It is very good of you to think of me. For my own part I have somehow taken on a big disgust of myself, and on that account ran away from New York in order that I might save you an infliction of which you have had enough this last year or two. Damn the world, the flesh and the devil! a pock and a murrain on Seaver and Hay! I'd get me to a nunnery if I could. I'll not get me to New York until The Tribune building is completed, when it is my wish to sprinkle a little holy water on it and say grace. As to Smalley—but what's the use of talking about Smalley? The next thing we hear of him he'll be in Parliament. Reid, Reid, Reid! Don't you be wicked. Be goody, goody, all the time. Don't write any lewd letters when you go to Europe. If I should turn the "Courier-Journal" into a religious paper and issue a Sunday edition every day in the week for half a dozen years—if I should be able to secure the pen of a good man like Bromley—I'd barely come off by sufferance, and then with a damaged reputation. I am up to my chin in household dirt. Write to me again and again. Look upon me as a man who is grateful for encouragement. Secure me a place in the prayers of the woman you love. Think of me sadly when the twilight descends upon Delmonico's. Remember me as one that hath starved and been mortified withal. The which notwithstanding I am ever and ever

Your friend,

H. Watterson.

His allusion to Delmonico's recalls more of those dinners to which I have referred, festive banquets at the Lotos, and others, of Reid's own giving, at their favorite haunt or at the Union League; dinners to Wilkie Collins, to divers kindred literary figures, and to a very different celebrity, Bonamy Price, the noted political economist from Oxford. Over the Price dinner there arose a preliminary confusion of dates, leading to this droll response from one of the guests invited:

9 Lexington Ave.,
November 17th, 1874.

My dear Reid:

One or the other of us will on Saturday be "a pearl without Price." He agreed today with me to dine here on Saturday, and you were on the list as one on whose presence I counted to assist in impressing the Guest with a sense of our intellectual development. Governor Tilden opened my eyes tonight by insisting that you had him booked for Saturday to meet Price. Shall we go half Price? Or as your invitations are out shall I resign to you on condition that I have a chance to do the genteel thing, i. e., whole Price, later in the season? Awaiting your decision, I am,

Faithfully your Bon Ami,
in the market
but without Price,
ABRAM S. HEWITT.

Wayne MacVeagh was another friend who liked to deviate from the prevailing political atmosphere into delightful fooling. He and Reid were in constant correspondence over corruption in Pennsylvania, and he kept appreciative watch over The Tribune's attacks upon the Philadelphia Ring. One morning he was rewarded for his attention by an editorial from Bromley's comic pen, which, as a member of the recent constitutional convention in his State, he was specially fitted to enjoy. The president of that august assemblage had been the Hon. William Morris Meredith, whose respectable but not by any means brilliant qualities had touched the sentiments of Secretary Richardson. Meredith died, and the master of the Treasury paid tribute to him by placing a very dubious portrait of him on a new ten-cent note. Bromley poked cruelly uproarious fun at the whole transaction, whereupon MacVeagh took a hand with these ingenious solemnities:

Harrisburgh, Penn.
May 9th, 1874.

WHITELAW REID, ESQ.

My dear Sir:

As you are reputed to be the responsible editor of the New York Tribune, I write to express to you something of the burning indignation which is aflame in the neighboring city of Philadelphia and is rapidly spreading into the rural districts, and which unless checked will itself check the further progress of your new building or will at least render the erection of that tower on which you and your coadjutors in evil deeds are known to have set your hearts, not to say "garnered up your lives," impossible. Even if you could borrow the money with your entire subscription list in this State cut off, we would not suffer the tower to be erected after your infamous conduct to the late lamented President of the Convention of which I may be permitted to say without undue egotism I was a bright and shining member. It was none of your business whether the likeness of our Presiding Officer was put on a ten cent or a ten dollar note, for when the choice was made they were likely soon to be of equal value—indeed the discredit was sure to be less and therefore the honor greater to be on the lesser lie.

You are not a judge of photographs, evidently, for in Philadelphia the profile is not only approved as a likeness, but the spirit of the late Joseph Harrison, Jr., the authority of that city in such matters and the patron of the great historical painter Rothermel, has been consulted and declares it is an excellent work of art. At every point, you see, you are unhorsed, discredited, rebuked, disgraced.

On these two conditions you can have peace! The instant dismissal of the low-bred fellow who wrote the malignant and slanderous article. He evidently has a private grudge against our late President and must be at all points a despicable character. There is some talk of lynching him and a rumor is gaining credence that his name is Bromley and that his spite arises from an application—rejected, of course, and instantly on sight of the applicant—for some subordinate position in our late Convention. Secondly his written consent that a picture shall be taken of him under the supervision of the friends of the late lamented President and when taken be substituted for the picture of which he has so irreverently spoken.

Make terms while it is possible. You have no conception of the state of public feeling here. It grows more bitter every hour and while today it may be satisfied with Bromley's disgrace, tomorrow it will demand his imprisonment, and the day after his blood.

Indignantly yours,
WAYNE MACVEAGH.

Reid's reply follows:

New York,
HON. WAYNE MACVEAGH. May 14th, 1874.

My dear Sir:

Bromley shall not be offered up. We will fight first, and from the loop-holes of the new Tribune fortifications will level the camera of the photographer on every wretch of a Pennsylvanian who dares a hostile approach.

Do look at the financial performances yesterday in the Senate. The last end of that man is worse than the first. Can we depend on Grant for another veto?

Very truly yours,
WHITELAW REID.

The performances, of course, were those which marked the hybridization of the currency bill. The one Grant had vetoed was indefensible enough, but it was "as the common sparrow to the dodo" compared with the complicated monstrosity that took its place. In a note of Garfield's written in that winter, he regrets missing Reid on a brief visit to the city, "where, in the language of the Pacific coast, we might have swapped growls pleasantly." It was a favorite occupation in their circle at this period, but before I return to the familiar cause of it I must touch upon one or two more instances of the brighter, suaver web in the thick-woven chronicle. Writing to Reid about a letter just received from Bayard Taylor, Mrs. R. H. Stoddard says: "He gives you warm and touching praise. He writes me that you as a *friend* fill the place Greeley held with him." The dossiers before me yield endless evidences of this capacity of Reid's for binding his comrades to himself. He had, for one thing, a way of furthering their interests. When J. Q. A. Ward, the sculptor, was starting for the frontier forts to study Indian life and character, it was Reid who introduced him to General Sheridan, the one sponsor in the world for an artist embarked upon such an adventure. Lew Wallace, looking for a publisher for his first novel, "The Fair God," found one through Reid's intervention with Osgood. That individual's gratitude o'erflowed. "You were the first to introduce Gen. Wallace to me, and consequently to fame!" he writes—and by and by came an odd sequel to this. It was a request from Wallace to Reid to examine and criticise "Commodus," an historical play in blank verse, a task before which the busy editor frankly blenched. He had a good deal to do, first and last, with the ventures of his literary friends. Warner and Mark Twain looked to him for important aid in the launching of "The Gilded Age." In view of the interest which always attaches to the art of collaboration in fiction, I append the letter in which he was apprised of the manner in which that book was produced:

Hartford,
April 7th, 1873.

DEAR MR. REID:

Maybe it's a great piece of presumption, but Mark and I are writing a novel, and can so nearly see the end of it that it is safe to speak of it. No one here, except our wives, knows anything of it. We conceived the design early in the winter, but were not able to get seriously at work on it till some time in January. If there is any satire on the times in it, it won't be our fault, but the fault of the times. We have hatched the plot day by day, drawn out the characters, and written it so that we cannot exactly say which belongs to who; though the different styles will show in the chapters. This may be a good feature, giving the reader relief, and it may be it will only bother him. It is, under the circumstances, rather a novel experiment.

We hope to get it ready for the press before Clemens goes to England. And when it is done we propose to go down and see you and take a rest from the distractions of country life for a few days. I am glad to see you are going to Dartmouth. I came near going there myself—if I had only been a poet. Our society convention there wanted "a poem." But I shall go to Cornell June 25th. We ought to compare notes on our orations. When it gets green and cheerful, remember that you and Col. Hay are due here.

Yours faithfully,
CHAS. D. WARNER.

Mark was in prodigious feather over the prospects of the book. He was going to take a copy of the manuscript over to England with him, so as to publish simultaneously on both sides of the ocean. "Some people think I have no head for business," he wrote, "but this is a lie." And, with gay anticipations of the pause in New York on the way to the steamer, he tantalizingly adds: "I have a nice anecdote that Hay will like. Am preserving it in alcohol—in my person." In the meantime the important thing was for The Tribune to spring the great news upon an unsuspecting world. "We want a mere mention, *now*, with either exceedingly complimentary additions, or pitiless abuse accompanied with profanity. We shall be down there within a fortnight. We think a pretty good deal of this novel I can tell you; even the paper it is written on cost eleven dollars." The plea bears this indorsement: "Dear Hay. Here's a chance for a rollicking bit of minion. W. R." Hay duly rollicked, to a tune which may be inferred from his opening remark—"Beaumont and Fletcher may now retire as instances of genius working in double harness"—and if the mails had been properly working just then Mark would have been duly elated before the sun went down. But his first impression of the "rollick" appears to have been received from a bald, brief quotation in some exchange, and his expectations were cruelly disappointed. Notoriously abysmal is the depression and tragic are the fears of the humorous temperament, when it subsides at all. Dreading the worst, but hoping that the first announcement was only the precursor of a second, the volatile Mark wrote as follows:

Hartford,
April 22nd, 1873.

MY DEAR REID:

Cheque received for $12., for which this is acknowledgment. All right! You go ahead and give us that other notice. Bilious? I was more than bilious—I was *scared.* When a man starts out in a new role, the public always says he is a fool and won't succeed. So I wanted to make every knife cut that could *help* us succeed, anyway. Why of *course* The Tribune would make Hartford talk, and the rest of the country for that matter—else why would I be so solicitous about what The Tribune said? That is just the point. I want The Tribune to say it *right* and say it powerful—and then I will answer for the consequences. The consequence will be that all other papers will *follow suit*—which you know as well as I do. And then our game is made and our venture launched with a fair wind instead of a baffling one.

Yours,
CLEMENS.

That must have been written in the morning, before Hay's paragraph, in its full perfection, had burst upon the anxious author. It came, shortly, and the happy man hurried off this happy note:

Hartford,
April 22nd, 1873.

MY DEAR REID:

Now, *that* notice is bully! If any man is deceived by that he will be deceived in the happy direction, at any rate—and that is what we want. All right, now!

Yours,
MARK.

Pungent and pointed is Mark, but not more so than his antithesis, Charles Francis Adams. His is the briefest of the colloquies which I find amongst these old passages. "We kept faith on the report. Did the Boston people?" Reid asks him. "They didn't. Damn 'em!" is Adams's sole reply. The vexations of an editor's world are never far off. They cannot break the sway of gentler things, it is true. Just at this time a letter from Charlotte Cushman brings a touching appeal for one in distress. "Like a good and true Knight," she begs, "keep a watchful eye for this kind old man, and set your lance in rest against his persecution." The subsequent correspondence shows that the great actress was well rewarded for her intercession. Reid was very helpful and his friends loved him for it. One of the most fragrant of these fugitive relics is a dinner-card of Stedman's, inscribed to Reid with this quotation from Holland's "Pliny": "Among which plants the Reeds may be ranged in the first place, for necessarie they bee in time both of warre and peace; they have their use besides and are accepted among the delightsome pleasures of this world." Delightsome, indeed, to Reid himself, were all the pleasures of peace. Only, as it happened, nine-tenths of his friends were incessantly summoning him to "warre."

CHAPTER XVII

THE RISE OF TILDEN.

The call to arms heard once more at the close of the preceding chapter was to be expected as a result of the general situation in the United States. "On the whole things do not look as cheerful for our beloved country as they might," remarked Watterson, and the theme was taken up in the same pessimistic key by everybody in the group to which he and Reid belonged. Public affairs were under a blight, and popular sentiment seemed incredibly slow in the assertion of any corrective, if, indeed, it was at all concerned about making itself felt, or had any intelligent sense of the direction in which its power might best be employed. In the cynical observation of Mr. Henry Adams, the people themselves had got a little out of hand in the seventies. In those brilliant autobiographical pages of his, gathered together under the title of "The Education of Henry Adams," there are some biting remarks on this point. "Society hesitated, wavered, oscillated between harshness and laxity, pitilessly sacrificing the weak, and deferentially following the strong. . . . The moral law had expired,—like the Constitution. Grant's administration outraged every rule of ordinary decency, but scores of promising men, whom the country could not well spare, were ruined in saying so. The world cared little for decency. What it wanted, it did not know; probably a system that would work, and men who could work it; but it found neither." Amongst Reid's friends the prevailing tone was almost as mournful. Yet amongst them, too, there was a survival of hope.

One and all, exacerbated no less than he was by the ravages of Grantism, they sang in despair the Stygian engulfment of parties, but they saw both the necessity and the possibility of "doing something," and as practical workers in the political vineyard they still pinned their faith on political organization. If the existing parties would not answer, then salvation might be found in some other quarter. The first man to seek out Reid with a view to persuading him into some sort of action from this point of view was Charles Francis Adams, then, at all events, more sanguine than his brother Henry. He visited The Tribune office one day in haste, on his way back to Boston, missed the editor, and went on, leaving vague and even troublous intimations that serious subjects were toward. He explained them, presently, as follows:

Boston,
November 13th, 1873.

My dear Mr. Reid:

Yours of 10th has come to hand. I am sorry to have given you so much trouble in running after me, but I regret very much not seeing you. The matter was one of very considerable importance and about which it is very difficult to write. I want to organize a political movement to influence events during this period of party disintegration and I have already seen several of the leading men of discontented mind on the subject. I wanted to see how The Tribune felt about co-operating in such a move;—my own impression is strong that a common ground could have been arrived at.

If this move is made it will be one of a good deal of significance. I have not yet had time here to bring things into a practical shape, but, if a demonstration is attempted, it will probably be about the Christmas holidays. I shall hope to have a chance yet to talk with you before any action is taken, and am very sorry we could not have exchanged views at this earlier stage of proceedings.

Very truly yours,
C. F. Adams, Jr.

For a little while the idea throve. Plans were made for a conference, and at first Reid was so far sympathetic as to agree that it should be held under his roof. D. A.

Wells was easily enlisted, and, in fact, helped to draw up the list of eligible conspirators. It is interesting to see who the men were who were to do what the Liberal Republicans had failed to do, that is, unhorse Grant. The band, as adumbrated by the originator of the movement, was to have consisted of himself, Bowles, Halstead, Reid, Wells, Godkin, Watterson, Schurz, Evarts, Isaac Sherman, Orton, J. D. Cox, Sam. Cox, Edgar Wells of Hartford, Walter Phelps, Bromley, and Charles Nordhoff. Would the redoubtable eighteen have saved the State? We shall never know, for they never got to the point of trying.

Schurz and Adams couldn't be in New York on the date first fixed for the conference, and so it was postponed, with hopes of a dinner later on that might serve the same purpose with less solemnity. Meanwhile Reid was sceptical, and his scepticism grew. He was repeatedly indicting the Republican party in detail, and he summarized it on one occasion as the Captain Kidd of modern politics. The saddest feature of the situation was, moreover, that the honest masses turning away from the party of the administration had nowhere else to go. The Democracy surely offered no decent refuge. But would a new party? It was by no means plain. He wrote discouragingly about it to Bowles, and presently arrived at the conclusion which, in a letter to Halstead, is thus expressed: "Young Charles Francis Adams has been in lately, and he, Wells and the rest insist that it is time the process of manufacturing the party of the future were fairly begun. I still hold that the best thing to do is to do nothing—save come to New York as often as possible, eat quiet dinners, and talk a great deal over the political situation, chiefly with a view to understanding each other's ideas and seeing when and where the chance for concerted action is going to appear." As was to be expected—and as Reid warned his friends, telling them that early publicity was about the worst enemy it could encounter—rumors of the movement leaked out. Forthwith, comedy. When Schurz delivered his eulogy on Sumner at Boston in the spring of 1874, three members of the old Quadrilateral were in the audience and stayed to talk with him. To the observant reporters this could mean only one thing. They put their heads together, decided that a new party was impending, and started hotfoot to be in at its birth, clamoring for information as to the exact date and the name under which the latest political hope would be introduced to mankind. The absurdity of the thing was too much for Reid. He explained, editorially, with mingled amusement and impatience, that the reporters were on the trail of nothing more than an insubstantial bugaboo. It never came to anything more than that, and in refusing to take it seriously he really helped to give it its quietus.

His faith in the principles which had inspired the Cincinnati movement was not shaken. Neither was his conviction that there are inalterable laws ruling in these matters. A party is the outcome of natural causes, it cannot be fabricated with malice prepense. "New parties are not made in that way," he told the readers of The Tribune; "in fact they are not made at all, they grow." And history would seem to confirm his judgment pretty conclusively, with its records of political mortality. The factitiously produced party is, as a rule, a blighted body from the start, all over pimply with isms which repel normal folk even before they strike inward and superinduce extinction. The way out from Grant's misrule was not to be by that uncertain road. What other offered itself to The Tribune? Reid was not, to be sure, at all perplexed. His policy of independence served very well, and he had no thought of subjecting it to alteration. There were those, however, who were quite ready to make up his mind for him, and they flourished nowhere more actively than, by a quaint paradox, in the administration ranks at Washington. They wanted him back in the fold! Walter Phelps thus reported this queerest of congressional phenomena:

Washington,
February 13th, 1874.

Dear W. R.:

Member after member comes to me, on the assumption that if I am not owner I am friend. To sum: They hate the "Times," since it has proved recreant to the Republican faith, bitterly. They would love The Tribune, and give it most zealous aid, if it would be Republican. It might lead the party, and have an influence and circulation unparalleled in journalism. They would want nothing more than a statement of future intention, not of past repentance. Say, e. g., "The Tribune under its present management has sought to maintain that independent position which would enable it without prejudice to criticize the acts of both parties. But blind and reprehensible as are many of the acts of the Republican party, it is still the great party, etc. As for the Democracy—salary grabber nominated for Speaker, etc.,—there isn't salt enough to save it, etc." What merit in their suggestions I cannot tell. I know they are sick of the "Times," and would like to rally round The Tribune. George Jones is here and pays me flattering attention. He says these anti-"Times" straight-laced Republicans are trying to get up a real Republican paper in New York. But George Jones doesn't fear. The "Times" is too strong longer to need the aid of politicians. I hope you keep well and happy.

W.

From a certain point of view these would-be peacemakers in Congress could feel that their advances were not altogether irrelevant. In so far as The Tribune had any party tendencies they were naturally Republican. Some time before the letter just quoted had reached him, Reid had made in his paper this clear statement: "There is an impression throughout the country yet that the Republican party is the safest, wisest, and most honest." He shared that impression. But he did not stop there. "If only it can rescue itself from the grasp of the scoundrels who have so long controlled it," his statement cruelly concluded. Hence it was in vain that the net was spread in the sight of the bird. The lure was tempting, but Reid's perspicuity was quite awake and so was his sense of humor. In Hay's pithy phrase, he "bited not," but returned to the politicians who had sought him out through Phelps this cool reply:

New York,
February 22nd, 1874.

My dear W. W. P.:

As to that suggestion about the unpopularity of the "Times" and the desire of Republicans that The Tribune should give them half a chance to come back to it:

Practically we have said again and again all that they suggest to you. We have said that the Democratic party lagged superfluous on the stage; that its conduct in the election of Fernando Wood was a final proof that it could not be trusted, and that there was no chance for a reorganization of parties until its demagogues got out of the way, etc. On the other hand we stood almost alone at the outset in the breach against Cushing, absolutely protecting the Republicans from their own President, who wanted to give them the worst sort of a copperhead Chief-Justice.

The difficulty is that while these people say that all that they want is just what we have already said, and while they doubtless believe that that is all they want, what they really want is something different. Their actual wish is that The Tribune should squarely defend Grant and the Administration against assailants. Their grudge against the "Times" is that it has refused to do it in certain flagrant instances.

Now there is no doubt that in a mere party point of view it would be possible for The Tribune at present to slip back into its old position as the leading Republican paper. I think we might have done it six months ago. But aside from the fact that it would be a dishonest thing for us to undertake to support men and measures we don't believe in, it would be shockingly bad policy to sacrifice the splendid position we have gained and the independent constituency that has gathered round us, only to go back to the old enfeebling and always dangerous position of an organ, just at the time when the party itself gives more signs than ever before of going to pieces. With a party paper the life of its party is a vital thing for itself.

With The Tribune the destruction of the Whig party was a critical point; the destruction of the Republican party, if it had remained an organ, would have been an alarming one. The fate of a million dollars' investment might depend on the accuracy of a single man's judgment as to which way the popular current was going to set. If he happened in a period of political dissolution to strike the side that was going to win, he would preserve the property; if not he might shatter it. With an independent paper there is no such business risk involved. The people who take The Tribune now take it because they want what it gives them. They will want that no matter what parties rise or fall. Aside from the general interest which all citizens of the country have, The Tribune has no interest in the downfall or building of any party. Its business at any rate is secure.

If this reasoning is correct, we should be abandoning a certainty which promises every year to grow larger and better, for an inferior position which would not be a certainty at all, if we should sacrifice our present independence for the old attitude of organship. At the same time I should like it very much if our Republican friends would only rub the scales off their eyes far enough to see that we have done and are doing nothing inconsistent with the most absolute fealty to the Republican principles which they learned from The Tribune and which this day have no more staunch defence than its columns afford.

Always faithfully yours,

W. R.

Translated into action "this reasoning" placed The Tribune in a position strategically ideal for the best exercise of its influence in the forthcoming State campaign. Local conditions played into Reid's hands, crying aloud for non-partisan reform. In the bitter fight of 1873 over the new charter then being framed for the city, the enemy seeking by subterranean methods to make that document a cloak for further administrative rascality was as much Republican as Democratic. Moreover, wherever he looked the relation of local ring politics to the national situation was vividly apparent. Abuses in New York and across the river in Brooklyn, abuses in Philadelphia and in Washington, were all manifestations of the same political rottenness which festered in the federal organism, and it was difficult to find points at which the national and State "machines" were not allied. The spectacle of Ben Butler, that "puffy demagogue," as Warner politely called him, trying to subdue the great State of Massachusetts to his will, offered a flagrantly conspicuous but not by any means isolated example of what the materialization of our politics had brought us to. Grant himself—perhaps unconsciously admonished by his recent sequence of misadventures in filling the chief-justiceship, trying first for George H. Williams and then for Caleb Cushing, before he had the good luck to fix upon Waite—was, as he rather naïvely expressed it, "beginning to think it was time for the Republican party to unload." That was in January, 1874. Reid was in no doubt at all about telling him what to unload. What needed to be cast overboard was chiefly "the system of picking and stealing" which his party had developed.

In New York circumstances combined in an unusual manner to promote an open-minded canvass, one in which the voter could direct his whole attention upon this simple issue. Both candidates were, as individuals, beyond cavil. Reid had come to revise his judgment upon Dix. The latter proved himself an able governor as his administration progressed, and he was no longer compared to the wooden steeple of Trinity Church. His personal character was, of course, irreproachable. So was Tilden's, and by good luck he, too, had a record on which to stand making a direct appeal to the citizen on practical political grounds, the result of his leading efforts in the smashing of the Tammany ring. Indeed, so evenly balanced were the two contestants in their claims, and so little was there to choose between the respective organizations behind them, that the voter was left in somewhat of a quandary. Reid thus hit off the situation in a note to his friend David Gray, the editor of the "Courier" in Buffalo:

New York,
October 9th, 1874.

My dear Mr. Gray:

I don't know as to the political outlook. The case is in a nutshell. Both the State candidates are good men; both the parties need black eyes. You know the judgment of the alarmed negro who, when informed by the camp meeting preacher that the road on his right hand led to hell fire, while the road on his left led to damnation, decided that it was about time for dis nigger to take to de woods.

Very truly yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

That state of dubiety persisted in the public mind down to within a few weeks of the election, and there were moments in which Reid himself shared it; but he was not a man to evade decisions, and some time before this letter was written he had divined the crux of the matter, shaping his policy in accordance with it. He was eminently fair to Dix, and did not exaggerate by a hair's breadth the governor's share of responsibility for the fact that taxes had not been brought into moderation under his administration, and that the canal and prison rings remained unbroken. But he blinked nothing of the cowardice shown by Dix and his party in the matter of the Third Term issue, which by this time was revealing itself as paramount. In its earlier stages that issue had amused while it startled. "Grant is in the field, be sure of that," Watterson had written in June. "Not that only; he can only be certainly beaten by becoming the nominee of the Democrats." This was considered at the moment an alarmist's view. Reid was half inclined, as were many others, to look upon the Third Term idea as a joke. But he could sniff the danger. It was a joke, yes, but one with ugly possibilities. It inspired in him not so much a fear of Grant as a fear of the enthronement of King Caucus, the perpetuation of party management in its worst form. So he fought it in season and out of season, editorializing the subject from one angle after another, printing a long historical analysis of it, "The American Rubicon," from Bigelow's caustic pen, reproducing every specious outgiving of the administration press in order to confute it, and altogether making the most of what he had finally come to regard as a vital principle. It was on this principle that he successfully led thousands of voters to the parting of the ways, the rival conventions happily giving him a clean-cut opportunity.

The Democrats were the first to get into action, at Syracuse. They were not, by the way, elated by the chance to nominate Tilden. How could they be, after what he had done to a number of perfectly good Democrats in New York? Besides, he had given his party colleagues a wicked snub in the early fall of 1873, when he had offered his resignation as chairman of the State committee and had rubbed salt in the wound by adding that he did not propose to cut short his pleasure tour in Europe in order to get home in time to vote. "His enemies have long been wont to call Mr. Tilden as cunning as a rat," The Tribune had said at the time, "and certainly he is contriving to keep out of the Democratic ship on the present voyage." But they needed him too sorely to keep him off the quarter-deck in 1874, and the factional opposition that at first threatened, soon died down. Reid gave cordial approval to his nomination, which he frankly characterized as dictated in advance by the well-nigh unanimous sentiment of the people, and he was on the whole satisfied with the platform. In one respect—and that was crucial—he could praise the Democrats with positive fervor. They had properly stigmatized the movement for a third term, and the last sentence of his rejoicing editorial pointed straight to the burning question of the moment—"Now let us see what the Republicans can do."

Reid made, himself, the utmost effort to get them to do something. I have spoken of the campaign of education which he carried on with Bigelow's aid. In editorials he adjured Grant, he adjured Dix, he adjured the party, to speak out. In private intercourse and letters he also did his best to move the men in whose hands the matter rested. He saw a good deal of Thurlow Weed in those days, and got him very sympathetically interested. On the eve of the Democratic convention, where the strong probabilities of a good Third Term plank in the platform only intensified his anxiety for Republican action, he wrote thus to the nestor of the party in the State:

New York,
September 11th, 1874.

My dear Mr. Weed:

I am so strongly persuaded of the possibility of a contingency in which Gov. Dix's chances may be materially diminished by the failure of the Republican convention to pass a strong explicit resolution distinctly denouncing the Third Term movement, that I hope you and he may be able to carry it through.

My own interest in it is primarily the desire to have this Third Term folly stopped at once before Grant has begun to throw patronage into the scale. I am unluckily compelled to be out of town for a week or two, and so trouble you with this hasty private note.

With great regard,
Very truly yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

By a fortunate chance, a very favorable opportunity arose at this juncture of affairs to press the point with Dix himself. There had been a matter pending with reference to certain city affairs about which The Tribune had taxed the governor with delay. Writing to explain his position, Dix also took occasion to add: "I avail myself of the opportunity to say that I hope the convention of the connection of the Liberal Republicans with the Democratic party is at an end. Their true place is with those from whom they were separated two years ago; and it has been my earnest desire that the re-union should be encouraged by a liberal policy on the part of my political associates. Our interest in the measures of reform which we have been laboring to carry out, is a common one; and it would be a public calamity if they should be imperilled by a further separation." He couldn't have given the editor of The Tribune a better opening. If there was one thing that Reid wanted to talk to him about just then it was public calamity. He replied to the governor as follows:

New York,
September 11th, 1874.

Gen. John A. Dix,
Governor of New York.

My dear Sir:

No one would be more delighted than myself if it were possible to realize the reunion on sound principles of the Republicans and the Liberals, to which you refer as now specially desirable. I made my entry into the Republican party, as soon as I got out of college, at the age of eighteen, by going on the stump for Fremont and Dayton; and I have certainly never swerved from any principle which I learned in the Republican party during the days of its struggles and greatness. I must say frankly, however, that, as parties now stand, I can see little of anything like a clear continuous dividing line of actual principles between the national organizations. Certainly the Republicans in the different states are not agreed on the question of specie resumption, though I should be heartily delighted if we could plant them all on the safe ground of your admirably timed, most able and effective message. The Democrats are as destitute of cohesion on this as on any of the other vital questions with which the statesmanship of the next ten years must grapple.

Personally, it would give me great pleasure to support you for the Governorship, and I sincerely hope and firmly believe that in spite of the intrigues which I know have been going on against you, your nomination may be made by acclamation. I must say, however, in addition, that, other things being equal, I could also well enough support Mr. Samuel J. Tilden, whose attitude on most of the questions which seem vital to the time is satisfactory, and whose service in the overthrow of the Tammany Ring none of us will ever question or forget. I have, therefore, held The Tribune up to this time uncommitted, and mean to do so until I see the platforms of the two great parties. I specially hope that you may be able, either by some masterly public demonstration like your financial message, or by the private exertion of your controlling influence, to force the Republican party to a distinct and unequivocal declaration against the Third Term. The President evidently encourages this movement if he does not openly commit himself to it; but it seems to me little short of an effort to change the form of our Government. The Republican Convention of New York can end the Third Term folly at once. Will you not force them to do it, and thus earn anew the public gratitude which your great career has so often inspired, and which, no matter what the future may have in store, I shall always take pleasure in expressing.

Believe me, Dear Sir, with the greatest respect,

Very truly yours,

WHITELAW REID.

Ten days later, as the Republicans gathered at Utica for their convention, Reid addressed to them on his editorial page the same warning plea. The State, he reminded them, was pretty evenly balanced between the two candidates. For the Republicans to pass by the question of a third term would be for them to throw into the hands of their opponents a large advantage. The action of New York would go a long way to settle the matter. Here, then, was a precious opportunity. In the stagnant harmony which prevailed at Utica that opportunity was callously thrown away. When the nomination was made The Tribune expressed once more its amiable opinion of Dix as a man and a governor, but it damned the platform as a shuffling and evasive document, from which only one idea was to be gathered—the re-election of Grant. Not so much as a gesture was made in reprobation of that possibility. Summing up the whole transaction, The Tribune said: "Of all the State Conventions thus far held by either party, it presents the vainest show of empty rhetoric and the weakest array of positive declarations." Thenceforth, while continuing to preserve a certain impartiality in the editorial columns of his paper, Reid made no pretense of disguising his conviction that the Republicans had made a fatal blunder, nor did he conceal the direction in which his sympathies were now placed as between the candidates. He remained quite unmoved when the party began to send up signals of distress, bringing in the potent name of Governor E. D. Morgan to strengthen its expression of serious alarm about the pending election. The best that he could do for the gentlemen on the anxious seat was to commend their case to the voters, with this two-edged advice: "What original Republicans should do is a question they must decide (without aid from any differences in the position or character of the candidates) according to their best judgment as to the effect, on the one hand, of encouraging Gen. Grant to believe that the people approve his course and want to have him a candidate again, or, on the other hand, of stimulating a revival of the old rebel and Tweed Democracy." Considering all that The Tribune was constantly saying about Grantism and the perils of its perpetuation, and, even more, considering Tilden's known attitude toward the Tweed Democracy, the irony with which these alternatives were cited must have struck the Dix people as freighted with peculiarly mischievous humor.

Reid's sarcastic advice was addressed to his readers on the morning of October 20th. That evening, at a Cooper Institute mass-meeting, Dix spoke out at last against the third term, facing, after a fashion, the issue which he had dodged at the convention. It was too late, it bound no one but himself, and Reid could only point out to him the sad fate of the statesman whose political epitaph ran to the effect that he had died of being wrong at the right time and right at the wrong time. "Death-bed repentance," he wrote, "is better than none; but it does not inspire unbounded confidence.

The Governor was wrong, persistently, contemptuously wrong, at the right time." Every political observer with his eyes open could see that, as well as the inconclusive nature of Dix's belated utterance, and no one quicker than his astute rival. Tilden pounced with all his fox-like expedition upon the vulnerable point. The governor made his speech on the evening of October 26th, anticipating by only twenty-four hours a Democratic rally at which note of his expressions was certain to be taken. In the morning Reid received this missive:

New York,
October 27th, 1874.

Dear Mr. Reid:

It seems desirable to press to a categorical answer, the question—What will Gov. Dix do if Grant decides to run a third time? Will he bolt? Or will he acquiesce?

S. J. T.

The ink upon this was scarcely dry before Bigelow, stanchest of Tildenites, had hastened to urge the same point upon their friend. He wrote:

The Squirrels,
October 27th, 1874.

My dear Reid:

Dix is opposed to a third term but he carefully neglects to say that he would not support a Third Term candidate of his party. Will he have any more courage in the presence of the next Presidential nominating convention than he had in the presence of the late convention? Political huzzies are very much like the other kind of whom Don Juan's mistress was the type, who—

Swearing she would ne'er consent, consented.

Would it not be well to suggest to the Governor that it was never seriously questioned that he was opposed to a third term for Grant—all the candidates for the succession are—but whether he will oppose Grant if nominated for a third term? Grant and his Murphies think not, and have so mean an opinion of the Republican party as to believe that very few of them would dare oppose him. He has a right to this opinion when he finds leaders like Dix, Conkling and Morgan yielding like wax in his hands.

Very sincerely yours,
John Bigelow.

Like wax the too complaisant governor went down, and with him a startling number of his "political associates." Nowhere in the country were the mid-term elections more significant than this one of the final exasperated revolt of the public against what Reid bluntly characterized as six years of rule remarkable for nothing but blundering and greed. The State of New York, which had given Grant and Dix a majority of 53,450 in 1872, and had elected twenty-four administration men out of her thirty-three congressmen, now defeated Dix, solely on account of Grant, by a majority of over 30,000, and left the administration not over ten representatives in the next House. Thus Reid tersely summarized the bulletins on the morrow of election, and, as a matter of fact, as the returns kept coming in, they only made the figures more crushing. He had accurately envisaged the issue. It was Grantism, pure and simple.

Favorably disposed as he was toward Tilden, he still distinguished between that leader and the heterogeneous nature of his following, building no false hopes of a completely regenerated opposition. The Democratic party had been not restored to public confidence, but used by voters, who would not trust it utterly, as an instrument for discipline. It had been placed on trial, and would so remain for the next two years. At the moment, the verdict delivered by the State—as by the country—bore only upon the question as to whether the administration deserved the public confidence and ought to be perpetuated. The negative had been pronounced, so loudly that even the President could not but hear. He knew now, with a vengeance, that the time had indeed come for the Republican party to unload. In fact, the people had begun to take charge of the unloading. The general sense of this fact, evidenced by comments in all quarters of the press, resounded chorus-wise in Reid's private correspondence. Earliest of all, as was appropriate, came from the Tilden camp the congratulations of Bigelow:

The Squirrels,
November 4th, 1874.

My dear Reid:

The King is dead! Long live the King! The grave has been dug large but not too large to hold Dix, Grant, and the Third Term abomination. Had the election been deferred a fortnight the grave would have been 10,000 votes larger. When Catherine de Medicis learned that an assassin had emancipated her son Henri III from the thraldom of the Duke of Guise, she exclaimed "The garment is well cut, now let us see if you know how to sew it up." With your help I trust the work of construction will prove as acceptable as that of destruction has proved to the country. The Tribune has covered itself with glory, while Organic remains smell to heaven. Accept my cordial congratulations and may the august shadows of yourself and staff never be less.

Very sincerely yours,
John Bigelow.

Tilden's own comment, in his speech at the Manhattan Club two nights later, clearly recognized the true posture of affairs. The great victory achieved in the State of New York, he said, was not a personal victory. No man, single-handed, had won the day. Reid knew this. He was quick, for example, to credit Bigelow with plenty of useful work. "I very cordially return your congratulations," he wrote. "No man has done more than you to bring about the result." And if there were to be any parcelling out of responsibility, Manton Marble, of the "World," who wrote the Syracuse platform, could not be forgotten. But Reid's share in the organization of victory was very great, how great will presently be shown by reference to the testimony of the man most closely concerned, and it is the special significance of his work in the campaign that has compelled the narration of the latter in some detail. The fight as he carried it on in the columns of The Tribune was but incidentally in the service of Tilden. It was, primarily, a fight for the public good, and as such it takes a clearly marked place in the history of independent journalism. All independent journalism, of course, is dedicated to the public good. We know that because the independent journalists have told us so. But its besetting tendency with us has been to approach the public ills with an arbitrary specific, or with something akin to the "King's touch" in mediæval times, which is to say with the omniscience of the superior person. The creed of the independent editor is frequently the only orthodox instrument of political regeneration in the world. He is the stubbornest of "offensive partisans." He allows his formulas and his temperament to obscure his view of life, like a man who holds a penny between his eye and the sun. Having on occasion high abilities, the influence which should be commensurate with them is restricted to a limited circle of fastidious malcontents by the pharisaical drift of his political philosophy. Reid's chapter in the annals of independent journalism owes its salience to the disinterested manner in which he framed it.

Himself a reformer, he had a superabundance of grievances, but they never promoted in him the querulous conviction that whatever is is wrong. His editorials in this campaign are often honestly explosive with wrath, never peevish with ill temper. Neither is there any hint of dogma in the record. Independent journalism, as he saw it, functioned the better for the public welfare when it rested not upon an esoteric programme, drawn up for the millennium, but upon the practical conditions actually confronting it. He was, as I have repeatedly said, a party man by nature, and when he left the Republican party it was not to sulk in a Cave of Adullam, it was to fight Grant and his people from the best point of vantage—from the outside. His independence was that of the liberty-loving rebel, not that of the doctrinaire who wants to substitute for the current shibboleth a shibboleth of his own. Hence the satisfaction with which, after decades of the closest identification with the Republican party, he could always look back upon the few years of his break with it. Some time ago I had occasion to seek some light from him on that period, and he wrote to me as follows:

London,
April 22nd, 1908.

Dear Mr. Cortissoz:

There are one or two points in my relation to Mr. Tilden which I would be glad to see brought out. The thing I am best content with in the whole story is the fact that after his election as Governor he sought to make me some recognition of my share in it, which he chose to describe as controlling. In fact, he said in so many words that he owed his election to me. I replied that I wanted nothing from him but a definite act binding his party to an acceptance of the results of the war, and particularly the sanctity of the debt, and the binding nature of the Constitutional amendments. Mr. Tilden assented to my wish, and inserted a paragraph intended to express it in his inaugural message. A copy of this was sent to me in advance, but I objected to it as too vague. He thereupon sent his private secretary to me, asking me to write it to suit myself, which I did, and he inserted it verbatim in the message as delivered. Whoever reads it will find it a stiff enough committal of the Democratic party to the support of the Constitutional amendments, and at that time I thought this a great point gained for the good and for the repose of the country.

Yours sincerely,
Whitelaw Reid.

Reid's urgency in the matter of the amendments needs no gloss as an instance of public policy. The bitter need for a thoroughly national recognition of their healing purpose is writ large across the history of the times. Ten years after the war the processes of "reconciliation and reform" were still grotesquely delayed, and by no agencies more powerful than those of Grant's administration. In view of the monstrous muddle which federal interference had produced in Louisiana—to cite the angriest of the several sores which that administration kept festering—The Tribune was surely justified in its statement that General Grant and his followers were laboring to make the war perpetual in the South, for the most sordid uses of party. But here, to throw a little additional light on Reid's concern over the amendments, I must recall the early origin of that policy which he pressed upon Tilden.

His point of view at the end of the war, expressed on the fall of Richmond, has already been stated—"There need be no haste in re-clothing defeated rebels with political power"—and I have alluded to the slight hopes of Southern rehabilitation which were raised in him by his observations on the tour he made with Chase. Yet there is nothing more marked about his subsequent thought on the subject than its freedom from rancor or the fixity of his belief in a truly fraternal settlement of the Southern problem as the only settlement worth having. Five years before this argument of his with Tilden, the appearance in The Tribune of an editorial indicative of a liberal ideal of reconstruction had irritated the nerves of Colonel T. W. Higginson. Busy over an article on Horace for Reid, he suspended his meditations on that classical theme long enough to say: "It's a wonder I could write for you today, after reading in yesterday's paper 'Chivalry and Carpet Bags.' That even the war should not have ended that miserable myth of Southern chivalry, 'pure domestic morality' (faugh!), and all the distinction of 'the hightoned gentleman!' I have lots of cousins among the F. F. V's and have seen the best side of the plantation life years ago and it was barbarism and nothing else." Reid's answer follows:

New York,
February 7th, 1870.

My dear Colonel:

This morning I opened two letters in succession: one of them was yours covering the review of Horace and the criticism on our article, "Chivalry and Carpet Bags," the other enclosed this clipping from the Pittsburg "Chronicle," which calls to mind the profound observation of an old moralist that the color of your spectacles makes all the difference in the world in the apparent color of the things you are looking at.

I, too, have seen much of the Southern people, having lived among them not merely for months but for years. There is some truth in what you say, and there is some truth in what our article said. Perhaps if the two were fused together it would make a more perfect and rounded statement of the entire truth concerning that same Southern character, but on that we probably could not agree.

On one point I think we ought to. Let us have done with this miserable spirit of carping at the South. We are the conquerors in the fight. The boy who is whipped generally feels sulky and if the boy who whips is magnanimous he doesn't undertake to thrash him again for having the sulks, less even stand off and call him names.

I will go to any length you may ask in demanding the enforcement of equal right for all at the South; but with the same earnestness with which I believe in this I repudiate and abhor the doctrine that a minority composed of negroes and disreputable carpet baggers can permanently and safely govern a large majority in any American state. Let us compromise in this.

Faithfully yours,
WHITELAW REID.

It was, then, only accidentally, as an opponent of Grant's, and far more—and fundamentally—as a reconstructionist with a long-established policy, that he made his request of Tilden. It arose in conversation first, as his letter to me explains, and while the new governor's message was in proof, but fortunately I can append the documents which embrace the further decisive phases of the matter. They failed to meet on the day when Tilden was leaving for his inauguration, and Reid therefore wrote to him thus:

New York,
December 31st, 1874.

DEAR MR. TILDEN:

I was exceedingly sorry that the pressure of unavoidable engagements made it impossible for me to call on you again at the hour you were good enough to name before your departure. I wanted to say then in full what I must here set down briefly.

I am more than ever convinced that the very great importance to the Democratic party, to the Opposition of all parties, and especially to yourself, of a ringing declaration on the subject of the Amendments to the National Constitution embodying the results of the war, does not meet in your message such full recognition as it deserves. I know very well what the counsels of timid men, who fear to offend the South or to go too far for the prejudices of their supporters, would be. But you can afford to disregard them. You are able to grasp the key to the situation; but you do not grasp it in this message. The man whom all the crowds of the Opposition are to recognize as their leader for the next two years, is the man who starts on the platform of an unequivocal, distinct recognition of the results of the war as a finality, to which all parties and partisans are in honor pledged, and to which he is bound not only by his honor but by his judgment. The man who does not do that, and does not make the common, hastily-reading people see that he does it, cannot hold the support which elected you. What you say on the subject of the Amendments is all right; but it is inadequate, and it seems grudging.

I write this with the frankness which I know you desire. I sincerely hope that before the message is irrevocable you may see your way clear to another paragraph, if possible toward the beginning of the message, or at least so conspicuously placed, and so explicitly phrased, as to attract attention throughout the whole country. There is the true starting point for any effort by the leaders of the Democracy to gain the confidence which during the war and since has been withdrawn from them.

Merely as political strategy (to say nothing of the great principle involved, which I am sure you will recognize) I do not believe that I overrate the importance of this matter. I beg you to give it your gravest consideration as, above everything else discussed in your message, the most important matter you have to deal with.

Very truly yours,
WHITELAW REID.

Tilden was inaugurated the next day. The day after he sent his secretary to New York with this letter:

Albany,
January 2nd, 1875.

DEAR MR. REID:

Fear as to how it will strike the South has no place in my motives on the subject. I am, personally, so committed, on several occasions, that I could save nothing now if I wished. But I have shrunk a little from giving occasion to the comment that in my message I nominate myself for the Presidency and lay down my Presidential platform. You will see how, at the beginning and the end of the discussion of the currency, I put in a passage to shield myself from criticism in dealing with that as if it were a state matter. This was the idea of introducing the topic of the amendments as an incident to the financial discussion. There is besides more emphasis and solemnity in putting it near to the close of the document.

I had already, since I saw you, introduced the words "final" and "in good faith," but since hearing from you, I have made a separate paragraph and added a declaration that the amendments *are binding not only on the South but on both political parties comprising the whole American people as a final settlement.*

That, I think, is all that you can wish; but I am sorry I cannot see you to discuss forms and words. As the best substitute, I send my nephew, Mr. Pelton, to show it to you, and also to have the proof corrected in a New York office.

Truly,
S. J. Tilden.

Mr. P. will read this to you, if you cannot.

The chirography was obscure, as the postscript quaintly admits, and as I can myself freely testify, but the willingness of the governor to meet the demands of his friend was refreshingly clear, and Pelton must have brought verbal messages making it even clearer, for, as we have seen, Reid settled the fate of the paragraph by writing it himself. Surely it was an odd concatenation of circumstances that brought this about. Few things in the queer kaleidoscopic movement of political life could surpass in singularity the turn of chance by which a man born and bred in Republicanism, and destined to spend all his life, save for one brief interlude, in the inner circles of the Republican party, was thus permitted to affect the fortunes of the opposition at an intensely critical moment in its history.

Reid devoted one of his editorials on the message, the day after it went to the legislature, entirely to the passage which had cost him so much concern, stating that in it the governor had formulated "the most important article of the creed of the new Democracy." With the writing of those words there went an amused sense of his own relation to them. They left him still with an open mind, still well aware of the fact that the Democratic party was only on trial. The reader will not expect me to terminate this chapter with the slightest modification of any of the ingredients of independent journalism out of which it has been compounded.

After the election Watterson wrote to him, saying: "You have won a real triumph in Tilden, a pure and able man, and doubtless your personal private friend. Why not rally on him for '76?" The essence of the whole matter is contained in Reid's reply:

New York,
November 7th, 1874.

My dear Watterson:

Yes, Tilden is personally an old and cordial friend. But it is too soon to be making personal plans for 1876. Tilden himself makes none, although the necessity of his position is upon him, and he cannot help being talked about as a Presidential candidate.

The Republicans under Morgan are talking very wisely about reorganization on a broader basis. The only reorganization they can make is one which shall cut off Grant and Grantism absolutely.

I can't quite see my way out of the muddle of existing parties as yet but one thing I do see, that it is safe to hold fast, namely, thorough independence of all party organizations, reserving the right to commend what is good in all, and to strive solely for the result of avowed principles with absolute indifference to any party claim save in so far as they try to secure the triumph of those principles.

How thoroughly events have vindicated your prescience last Spring, when you astonished us all with declaring that Grant really meant a Third Term. I woke up to it in midsummer and made my plans for our Third Term campaign here before I was driven by a chronic sleeplessness to the country. Looking back over it now, I feel rather well satisfied with the various steps in our attack.

Always very truly yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

It was in the mood of this letter that he began the new year, well satisfied with what he had done as regarded the governor's chair, and utterly free as to the course to be pursued when the time, near at hand, came for tackling the problem of the President's.

CHAPTER XVIII

BUILDING UP A PAPER

In the midst of hard times The Tribune prospered. Shortly after the Tilden campaign Reid wrote to Smalley that the circulation was larger than it had ever been in Greeley's lifetime, excepting at certain high tides registered in the Civil War. "We have passed handsomely," he said, "above the highest point reached during the Franco-Prussian War; and the peculiarity of all the spurts we have made in the last year and a half is that in every instance, after the special excitement has passed away, we have held at least three-fourths of what we had gained." On April 10th, 1875, when the paper entered upon the thirty-fifth year of its existence, and celebrated the event by taking possession of its new building, note was duly made of an average daily circulation of 50,230 copies. The new building had a place of its own in all these developments. The reader has heard of it before, but must not be surprised at hearing of it again, for the truth is that it was an important factor in Reid's plans for his administration. From the day the foundations were laid his friends recognized this. In his correspondence for the two years of construction the new building crops up pretty nearly as often as the wickedness of Grantism. Watterson, as we have seen, threatened that he would not come to New York until the edifice was up, "when it is my wish to sprinkle a little holy water on it and say grace." They cheered him on, poked fun at him, condoled with him when ruthless hod-carriers struck for higher wages, and endlessly gave him advice. Halstead, with poignant fellow feeling, thus adjured him: "I infer from a publication in The Tribune concerning the new Tribune building, that you propose to heat the house with steam. It occurs to me as a matter of humanity to say to you, before it is everlastingly too late, if it is not already, that you should provide for the room that you occupy yourself, to omit the steam pipes and put in a neat fireplace. The steam-pipe system of heating is the most infernal ever invented, for the destruction of editors especially." He found the neat little fireplace, andirons, cheerful glow and all, when he visited his friend that winter.

The building was, indeed, a fulfilment of all that Reid and his sympathizing friends could ask. It was literally true that no newspaper had up to that time, anywhere in the world, been so well lodged; there were new presses in the cellar to keep pace with the new requirements of the paper, and from top to bottom the work of construction had been perfectly done. "It is more strongly built than the temple of Pæstum or the aqueduct of Segovia," runs the dedicatory editorial, a boast which was made good when in after years the height of the building was increased and the well-nigh cyclopean walls proved their capacity for strain. Reid loved those walls. He used to speak with pride of their bulk and indestructibility. And he rejoiced, too—trebly at the time—in his high-erected tower. In 1875 its elevation of two hundred and sixty feet above the pavement was only beaten by that of Trinity's spire. It bowed to the capitol at Washington, but it looked down upon Bunker Hill Monument, and these were the sole structures off Manhattan Island which it deigned to recognize as rivals. It stood for success, too, where success had seemed almost impossible. On the night of the great day of its dedication Hay drew his chief to the office on the vague plea that the staff wanted to see him. They gave him a piece of silver, with an affectionate tribute that Hassard wrote and everybody signed, and Ripley, who made the speech of presentation, adverted in this wise to Greeley's death and the time of doubt which followed it: "The enemies of The Tribune predicted that its days were numbered, and that the bells which had tolled its founder to his final rest were still ringing out the knell of its departed greatness. It was then that one of the youngest soldiers of our corps, young in years but ripe in wisdom, with a sagacity that would do honor to gray hairs, with a courage that no perils could intimidate, with an energy that was ready to thrash mountains with a flail, and with a noble ambition that did not overleap itself and fall upon the other side, but which put the right man in the right place, came forward and took the helm of the new Tribune, whose birthday may well be dated from that auspicious hour." From the many letters of congratulation that reached Reid at that time I may draw the following, from Blaine:

Washington,
April 10th, 1875.

My dear Mr. Reid:

I have just read today's Tribune—and I cannot help writing you a line of congratulation. You have the most abundant reason to be proud of your wonderful achievement in journalism—for I think in all the elements of a really great newspaper The Tribune is unequalled today on either continent. And you are acquiring such *prestige* that I hardly know what limit can be placed to the progress and power of your paper.

I do not, of course, know anything about the pecuniary results of your dashing and daring enterprise—but I can plainly see that you are making it terribly expensive and burdensome to the other metropolitan dailies to even keep in sight of you. In a very short time The Tribune will be practically without competition in the most advanced sphere of journalism.

A note of this kind from me would be misconstrued by the public. By you it will be understood as my tribute to the victor in one of the greatest, most difficult and most heroic fields of intellectual effort.

Very sincerely, J. G. Blaine.

Nothing could have been more inspiriting. Sweet is the encouragement of friends. It was pleasant to hear from Hay in that same year, writing after he had gone back to Cleveland: "You have made a great position, personal and professional. You are probably the best known man of your age in the country."

The reader who sought in the files of The Tribune for the sources of its success at this time would be struck, in the first place, by the evidence of what Reid meant when he claimed to at least know "what a newspaper ought to be." He meant, before anything else, that it should be a full and faithful record. The most obvious feature of the paper in the middle seventies was its exhaustive treatment of the great news sensations of the period. No historian dealing with the subjects could afford to neglect The Tribune's reports of events like the investigation into the Pacific Mail Subsidy, the State Canal Ring, and the national Whiskey Frauds; they are, in fact, themselves pages of history. As the Beecher trial drew its slow length along, piling up its dreary mounds of testimony and argument, the verbatim reports in The Tribune were made so well that by common consent judge and counsel turned to them as the authority of the court. A striking tribute to the value of the paper as a calendar of events comes in this letter from Reid's friend Adams, who as chairman of the Board of Railroad Commissioners in Massachusetts had a particular interest in published statements of fact:

Boston,
February 13th, 1875.

My dear Mr. Reid:

I want to suggest to you the idea of having prepared *and printed* in future, year by year, an index of The Tribune. I have, in my investigations, to examine the files of papers, and they drive me nearly crazy for want of an index. The London "Times" publishes one and it is of immense service. If an American paper like The Tribune would do it, it would at once place that paper at the head of the press as the standard for reference. Put it, in fact, in the position of the "Times." I wish you would consider this and make it a yearly publication, like your Almanac. A person like myself could then buy it each year, and examine it at home, going to the files to find what was referred to.

Yours truly,
C. F. Adams, Jr.

He was so keen about this that in a further letter he undertook to figure out what the thing would cost, how much an indexer would have to be paid, and what the printing bill would be. An edition could easily be sold, he argued. "Libraries must have it and the whole race of politicians could not live without it." They had already been doing in The Tribune office for some years, in an imperfect way and purely for office use, what Adams suggested. But now the scheme was improved, and early in 1876 an index in pamphlet form for the preceding year began the annual series which he wanted. Meanwhile the audience to which the annual appealed was steadily augmented in quarters where numbers and loyalty were most to be desired. William Cullen Bryant, of the "Evening Post," was indignant because, through the rivalry of The Tribune, his journal "was losing the distinction of being the only paper for gentlemen and scholars!" A note from President Gilman, of Johns Hopkins, sheds a bit of light on this subject. "The Tribune hits college people so widely over the land," he says, "that I shall be particularly glad to be heard by that audience which you command so completely." It hit them through the editor's interpretation of the word "news." The sensations aforementioned stick out, necessarily, in the annals of those days. But the "tone" of The Tribune was determined in other ways also; by a notable interview with Andrew Johnson on his election to the Senate; by a series of financial letters from Hugh McCulloch in London, the former President's secretary of the treasury; by Charles Reade, expounding his views on the rights and wrongs of authors; by Garibaldi, explaining his plans for the reclamation of the Roman Campagna; by Thurlow Weed, setting forth his reminiscences of Queen Victoria's good-will for the United States in certain historical crises; by Hans Christian Andersen, expressing thanks for a birthday gift which an editorial in The Tribune had originated; by Hassard's memorable description of the opening performances at Bayreuth. It was Hassard again, and Bayard Taylor, who led the staff assigned to describe our Centennial exhibition at Philadelphia. When there was particular occasion for an article on Carlyle, Reid tried to obtain one from Emerson. Decidedly The Tribune was what Godkin had found it in Greeley's day, "like the Comédie Française."

Reid's experience with one of his brilliant "Societaires," Henry James, brings out in an amusing manner the play of his idea of what a newspaper ought to be. He had a strong European staff, but with the opening of the new building he was in the mood to think of additional men, and he received with cordial approval this letter of Hay's, proposing that he give the author of "A Passionate Pilgrim," now turning pilgrim himself, a chance:

Cleveland,
July 24th, 1875.

DEAR MR. REID:

Henry James, Jr., wants to write for The Tribune, letters from Paris, where he is going to live for some time to come. He considers The Tribune the only paper where business could be combined with literary ambition. I hope you will engage him in place of Houssaye. He will write better letters than anybody—you know his wonderful style and keen observation of life and character. He has no hesitation in saying that he can beat Houssaye on his own ground, gossip and chronicle, and I agree with him. Besides, his name is almost, if not quite, equally valuable—and far more regarded by cultivated people. He would cost not more than half what Houssaye costs (counting translation) and I think his letters would be about twice as good. He would not interfere with Huntington but would simply take Houssaye's place—and in my opinion fill it much better.

He will start in the autumn some time. You might let Houssaye run on until James gets there and then discharge him with a Grantish letter telling him how delighted you and the public have been with his letters, but that the labor of translation has been very difficult and now has become almost impossible through the removal from New York of the invaluable rooster who did it, etc., etc.

In short, this is the statement. You pay Houssaye $30. for a not very good letter and me, Heaven knows how much for translating it. For, say, $20. or $25. James will write you a much better letter and sign his name to it.

His address is 20 Quincy St., Cambridge, Mass. You can write to him or to me.

Yours faithfully, HAY.

Reid's answer was a request to Hay to go ahead and make the engagement. The first-fruits of it, gathered before Christmas, were very encouraging, and if the nineteen letters which were scattered through The Tribune over a period of eight or nine months were not precisely what Hay had expected them to be—"the best letters ever printed from Paris"—Reid nevertheless believed that they gave a great deal of satisfaction to his readers, as he was careful to tell his correspondent. Some of them were very good, notably the three on Chartres, Rouen, and Etretat, which were later incorporated in "Portraits of Places." They were "played up" and due heed was given to this plea, which I cite for its delightfully "Jacobean" fastidiousness:

29 Rue de Luxembourg,
April 23rd, 1876.

MY DEAR MR. REID:

I enclose another, a 14th letter. Let me add a most earnest and urgent request that the practise of inserting headings to the successive paragraphs in my letters, which I see was begun on April 1st last, be not continued. I object to it in the strongest possible manner and I entreat and beseech you to cause it to be suppressed. May I not safely count upon your doing so? The thing is in every way disagreeable to me.

Yours very truly, HENRY JAMES.

The luckless copy-reader who had sought with "cross-heads" to break up an unusually long letter was forthwith admonished to let that expedient alone. Reid was quick to sympathize with the instinct of a man of letters. But his decision a few months later offers a striking example of his own instinct as an editor, the instinct convincing him that the man of letters, writing in a newspaper, must also be a journalist. He wrote to James, asking him to make his letters shorter and to get more news into them. The subjects chosen were sometimes too remote from popular interest. The most interesting period of the Centennial was approaching, as well as the active stage of the presidential campaign. The Tribune constituency, intelligent as it was, might very possibly fail to rise at such a time to the pure literary treatment of a subject. Brevity, variety, topics of wide interest—these were the virtues commended to James, and above all else, brevity. "Even when the limit is fixed at a column it is best, as the candid church-goer said to his parson, to err on the side of mercy. You must not imagine that any of us have failed to appreciate the admirable work you have done for us. The difficulty has sometimes been not that it was too good, but that it was magazine rather than newspaper work."

The Jacobite, conscious only of devotion to his master, might find these sayings a little cruel, addressed to Henry James. But they drive straight at the central principle of journalism, the only principle on which a great newspaper can be founded, and James himself saw that they were just. His reply follows:

Chateau de Varennes,
August 30th, 1876.

My dear Mr. Reid:

I have just received your letter of August 10th. I quite appreciate what you say about the character of my letters, and about their not being the right sort of thing for a newspaper. I had been half expecting to hear from you to that effect. I myself had wondered whether you could make room for them during the present and the coming time at home, and I can easily imagine that the general reader should feel indisposed to give the time requisite for reading them. They would, as you say, be more in place in a magazine. But I am afraid I can't assent to your proposal that I should try and write otherwise. I know the sort of letter you mean—it is doubtless the proper sort of thing for The Tribune to have. But I can't produce it. I don't know how and I couldn't learn how. It would cost me really more trouble than to write as I have been doing (which comes tolerably easy to me) and it would be poor economy for me to try and become "newsy" and gossipy. I am too finical a writer and I should be constantly becoming more "literary" than is desirable. To resist this tendency would be rowing up stream and would take much time and pains. If my letters have been "too good" I am honestly afraid that they are the poorest I can do, especially for the money! I had better, therefore, suspend them altogether. I have enjoyed writing them, however, and if The Tribune had not been the better for them I hope it has not been too much the worse. I shall doubtless have sooner or later a discreet successor. Believe me, with the best wishes,

Yours very truly,

H. James, Jr.

James had talked to Hay of beating Houssaye on his own ground of "gossip and chronicle." He had failed to do this and it left a smart. It left also a journalistic ambition that was still unsatisfied. The "Nation" was always there and James went on contributing to it, as he had for several years, but his desire to turn the trick in The Tribune, in a newspaper in the strict sense, comes out in a note of his written that winter. "I have transferred myself, you will see by my date, to London, whence I sometimes wish there were an occasional pretext for writing to The Tribune. But, with Mr. Smalley here, there of course can be none whatever." He was right. Smalley, like an anaconda, devoured all the pretexts.

There is diversion in the contrast between James and Charles Reade in their relations with The Tribune, a contrast between two drastically different types of the literary temperament. The author of "The Cloister and the Hearth" had in him, surely, the genius of the born romancer, but he was also the most biddable of practical journalists. He liked the idea of receiving part payment for his contributions in advertisements, and when a proposal to that effect rather staggered Reid, he said: "I do beg of you to consider that I sell ideas and words and you sell advertisements, and what I propose is a just exchange of commodities." His first appearance in the paper was made in 1874, when his narrative of "A Hero and a Martyr" recited the exploits of one James Lambert, a Scotsman who had saved some forty odd persons from drowning, and then had been rewarded by fate with blindness and penury. It was a thrilling composition. Bret Harte came running across the street to say to Reid: "It is in my judgment the very highest work of art in modern English literature. Nothing that any English novelist has ever written equals it." In passing on that gorgeous tribute to the author Reid naturally offered him the further hospitality of his columns. The invitation was accepted, as I have already indicated. I need not recapitulate Reade's various papers, but I must quote the letter in which he outlined his plans for them:

2 Albert Terrace,
Knightsbridge,
May 23rd, 1875.

Dear Sir:

Many thanks for your kind letter. I have been thinking of it, though I did not answer it till I had something tangible to say. I will send you now and then a letter or article in advance of its publication in any English journal. These articles should deal with current events and topics of discussion or controversy. Sometimes a pure argument. Sometimes a description and comment. Sometimes a little narrative and comment. Every one of them will be written with rather more care than usual with me, not less.

Now of course I know that the narrative and descriptive articles will be more agreeable to you in the way of business than the argumentative ones. But I think you are too reasonable and too well disposed to me to refuse to take the vegetables along with the meat, as the saying is. For my part, as I am about to make you the sole vehicle of my *convictions* in the U. S., I shall of course expect those convictions to be printed, even when you differ from me; but in that case, confute my letter if you please in another column. I only ask publicity, not assent, and my letters, being signed, commit you to no opinions you disapprove.

With regard to the remuneration, I entirely agree with you. So strange and exceptional a thing as "A Hero and a Martyr" rests entirely on its own basis. I shall never again encounter a James Lambert. Nothing in the way of comment can ever be worth paying for on that scale: and what you and I are now going into is principally comment. My proposal to you is this: Do not take each article by itself but on settling the payment put them together, and do not pay me at all till you see whether they fall dead, or are quoted by other journals and magazines: and then pay me a little less than they have proved to be worth, but not much. That is sound business.

I will send you herewith two letters, one on the popular subject, "Dogs," the other on the unpopular subject, "Authors." The dignity of the quadruped is to balance the insignificance of the Biped. When I can find a powerful vehicle in England I propose to treat the rights and wrongs of authors, and expose the cant and equivokes, and droll errors, cf statesmen and judges, and the false arithmetic of publicists, and pour the light of common sense and idiomatic English on the subject. These articles shall be sent you in advance and will, I think, open everybody's eyes more or less.

Yours very sincerely,

Charles Reade.

Everybody's eyes were opened very wide indeed. He was gloriously truculent and rejoiced in the sensation his articles created, especially those on copyright. "I don't care how much temporary bile I stir up," he remarks in the midst of the fracas. "The country will know one day whether I was its friend or not. All I fear is falling dead." What a contributor! Charles Reade was one with so much of the journalistic habit in his make-up that he could meet an editor half-way without even waiting for a formal statement of the editorial point of view.

Another highly reasonable contributor was Walt Whitman. At the time of the massacre of the Little Big Horn, Reid printed "A Death Sonnet for Custer," by him. It had arrived accompanied by this modest note:

Camden, New Jersey.
July 7th, 1876.

My dear Reid:

I send a piece for the paper, on Custer's death. If you can give me $10. for it, well and good—if not, not. If it comes in time, get it in tonight, as earliness is everything.

Walt Whitman.

Reference to Custer moves me to retrace my steps for a moment and to introduce here a letter of his possessing a melancholy historical interest. He and Reid had been warm friends from old days in the Civil War. Early in 1876, in a pause in the Indian fighting which for some years had occupied him, Custer thus sketched the campaign which was to prove his last:

St. Paul, Minn.
February 26th, 1876.

My dear Friend:

Thinking you would like to have The Tribune represented I write confidentially to say that the most extensive preparations are being made for a combined military movement against the hostile Sioux that have been attempted since the war. A column under my command will leave Fort Lincoln, D. T. not later than April 1st, prepared to remain in the field all summer. Gen. Crook has already started to concentrate his column at Fort Fetterman, while Gen. Gibbon will do the same at Fort Ellis. There is scarcely a chance of avoiding a general Indian war this coming season. The Sioux have already begun and are now surrounding a party of white men at Fort Pease on the Yellowstone (not on an Indian reservation). Troops are marching to the rescue from Ellis. This I write to you for your personal information. The authorities have been laboring to keep all movements secret but they will all be made public perhaps by the hour this reaches you. If you send a special correspondent select some good man accustomed to roughing it. I wish Mr. Barrows could accompany us again. The party going should reach Fort Lincoln by the 25th of March. I leave here Wednesday next for Fort Lincoln by the N. P. R. R.

Truly yours

G. A. Custer.

That was really Custer's farewell to his old comrade. His departure for Fort Lincoln marked the opening of the swift drama which was to end at the Little Big Horn.

One of the duties imposed upon Reid at this time was that of speaking at the annual distribution of prizes to pupils of the Academy of Design. Another was to sit in judgment, with others, upon an Intercollegiate Literary Contest. He did a lot of that sort of thing—so much that Walter Phelps, in one of his affectionately solicitous notes, expresses anxiety lest he should do more. "Wherever you are," he writes, "patriotic peace. The 'Sun' is very wicked—so is the Devil. Miss Schurz read the Evarts address aloud. In listening to it, I thought, as I have done in the case of every public address since, 'Why, wasn't there more thought in your "Scholar in Politics" than in all of them?' It really seems so, more and more, as effort after effort for similar occasions come into sight, and fail in the comparison. But I would rest on that, and not do anything more of any kind, however good, out of my paper. You have shown with conspicuous success that you can do orations or essays, and that is enough. It is much nicer, having proven this, to keep close to your own business. All of which is fatherly—but aren't you sometimes fatherly to me?"

He needn't have worried. Even if Reid had been tempted to give more time to his lighter activities, the automatic pressure of public affairs was enough to relegate them to the background. In another note from another intimate the political thread is resumed in a few sentences that have a world of meaning. Hiram Barney wrote it, saying on Tilden's election to the governorship: "I heard the news at Keokuk, Iowa, as soon as you did here in New York, and I was, as you may have supposed, glad to hear it. I felt like singing the Doxology in long metre. I thought Third-Termism is dead, Grantism is dead, Butlerism is dead, and where are the mourners? *Well, I am not sure that all those deaths have actually occurred.*"

CHAPTER XIX

PARTY REORGANIZATION

There were thousands and hundreds of thousands of voters who found themselves in precisely the state of mind that visited Hiram Barney. They had thought the battle virtually won, and all the time its decisive phase was exasperatingly awaiting them. None of the detested "isms" was dead, and if any observer was aware of the dangers of premature singing of the Doxology over them, in metre long or short, it was Whitelaw Reid. He had never lost sight of the fact that the close of the war had still left the country exposed to more than one peril. Rebellion had been crushed, slavery abolished, and disunion had been escaped. But in the reconstruction of the Southern States a point had been reached where it was necessary to say either that they had to be governed as conquered provinces or left to govern themselves—and at that point the administration had only irritated the problem. Secondly, we remained enmeshed in the toils of an irredeemable currency, and, to conclude, we suffered from what Reid described as "a wide-spread prevalence of corruption and bribery."

It is an axiom that every Amurath has his successor. The scandal of Crédit Mobilier was followed by that of Pacific Mail. To the amiable Oakes Ames succeeded an equally amiable lobbyist. As The Tribune concisely put it, it was believed that he had received a sum not less than $750,000, and perhaps amounting to over a million, to get the Pacific Mail Subsidy through Congress. There was nothing to show what he did with it, but there were reasons for thinking that some of this money had passed into the hands of members of Congress. The Tribune made a strenuous campaign on the issue, forcing the fight to such an extent that Reid was presently subpœnaed as a witness, and went down to Washington to be examined by the congressional committee appointed to inquire into the subject. "You think we have got to the door [of Congress itself] and will not enter," said one of his inquisitors, "but we will enter, if you only show us the way." The remark, with its appeal to editorial responsibility, invites here a brief excursion on just what Reid's conception of editorial responsibility was in matters of this sort. Summing up not long afterward the relations of The Tribune to the Pacific Mail business, he wrote, among other things, the following:

> It is a foolish waste of time to call upon Editors for details of the crimes they denounce to public reprobation. It is their business to print what they know of such matters, and to leave the rest to the proper authorities. We learned that the Pacific Mail Company had spent money like water in Washington. We asserted this, and the Committee has proved it. If we knew what Congressmen got the money we would print the names; it would need no subpœna from Washington to make us do that. We do our best, and that is a great deal. We cannot always wait for exact legal evidence before denouncing a dangerous wrong. If we had waited for that, Judge Barnard and his corrupt associates might have been today upon the bench. Over and over we made charges against them of which we were morally sure, but as to which we were not fully prepared with strict legal proof. If they had not been true the corrupt judges might have sued us and obtained damages—that was our risk, one which we are always ready to run in a cause which we think to be just. No newspaper, however powerful or enterprising, can compel the legal proof which lies in the hands of a Court or a Congress. We can only say what we believe to be true and right, and accept the full responsibility.

With that philosophic contribution to a subject of everlasting interest to editors, if not to all their readers, I may turn from Reid's contact with Pacific Mail—but not before I have noted a comedic sequel to his attendance upon the committee at Washington. Incidentally he suffered a droll interruption. That evening, at the Arlington, he was arrested on a criminal process issued by the supreme court of the District, in an action for libel brought against him by Boss Shepherd, whose public conduct had long been subjected to scathing treatment in The Tribune.

He was arrested as he was preparing for dinner, but on his promising to appear and answer in court in the morning, the officers went away. A little later, when he was dining at the house of Speaker Blaine, he was called to the door and papers were served on him in a civil suit for libel brought by Shepherd. But their vexatious action only served to bring powerful friends to Reid's aid. More than one indignant citizen hastened to arrange the matter of bail, and the affair brought about one especially valued manifestation of friendship. It came from the venerable Reverdy Johnson, the successor of Charles Francis Adams as minister to England. When at his home in Baltimore he heard of Reid's arrest he left at once for Washington, arriving late at night, and sent his son to see whether he could be of service in the morning —refusing, in fact, to retire until he could learn that there was no imminent danger of any effort at high-handed proceedings. The next day he made a more formal tender of his services as counsel, on the double ground of personal friendship and sympathy with the defendant in the cause of prosecution. On the eve of sailing for Europe that fall, Mr. Johnson wrote: "I hope that the libel suits against you in Washington will not be disposed of before my return, as I am anxious to appear in them on your behalf." One of his first acts on returning was to ask about the state of the litigation, repeating his offer. As a matter of fact, the frivolous nature of the suits was perfectly clear to Reid from the start; he did not think that the Boss ever really meant to bring them to trial, and even in that event he feared nothing worse than a packed jury. Quite apart from the personal bearing of this absurd incident there was, in its having occurred as it did, a symptom of the unhealthy state of things in Washington. The evilest aspect of the arrest resided in the matter of the time and place chosen for it. Representative Hoar of Massachusetts offered a resolution the next day for the appointment of a committee to inquire whether the privileges of the House had been violated by the serving of papers upon Reid while he was in the District under congressional subpœna, and even Representative Dawes, who felt himself aggrieved by publications in The Tribune on Pacific Mail, cordially gave his aid to pushing the measure through. The general impression that went abroad was that the suits, like the subsidy, made an ugly sign of the times.

The worst indications of the persistence of Grantism in this period were perceptible, of course, in purely political affairs, and they became most alarming in the crisis in Louisiana. There, as the logical result of two years of political fever, a minority legislature, foisted upon the State by fraudulent proceedings in the fall elections, was seated in New Orleans under the protection of federal bayonets. "The President of the United States was at their back, and the army and navy at their command," Reid declared in scarifying those adventurous politicians, and all through the winter he fought against the national disgrace which presently called out, indeed, something like a national protest. The tremendous mass-meetings promoted in New York, in Boston, in Baltimore, echo as with the passion of war through The Tribune's editorials. These expressed biting views on the burden the President had laid upon the Republican party. The party, in accepting it, had gone out of its head. Through its lawlessness in Louisiana it was committing absolutely gratuitous suicide. Subsequent developments in South Carolina were only to confirm this hypothesis. The Southern question was foredoomed to stay an ill time in our political life, and Reid returned to it again and again during the campaign of 1876. It was his opinion that we had not gone so far away from the Rebellion as we had then supposed, and his search, when the time of presidential candidacies drew near, was all for the man who could shape a satisfactory course toward a people still disaffected, discontented, and heart-sore.

Yet of the issues which he was now constantly threshing out, that of the currency was the one on which conditions stimulated him to deal his most vigorous blows. In the middle of Grant's second term we were heading steadily toward a gold famine and all the embarrassments of a bad national deficit. Maladministration alone could do sufficient damage—Reid was a firm believer in the maxim that one hole is enough in a balloon—but the outlook was rendered doubly menacing by the unremitting growth of the greenback craze. Americans of a later generation are familiar with the emotions of mild terror and not quite so mild wrath aroused by the fanatical frenzy of the silverites, and, having withstood the storm, they can look back upon it with a certain humor. Reid, himself, after that later disturbance, could be thus serene. Once, in a talk with him about the sixteen-to-one madness, I asked him what, in a nutshell, was his opinion of Bryan. "Well," he replied, with a twinkle in his eye and an ironic smile, "when a man polls as many votes as he has received for the Presidency, I suppose there is something in him." But in the seventies there was no twinkle in his eye for the advocate of illimitably expansible paper. The Senate Currency Bill which was jammed through the House in January, 1875, he denounced as the product of organized lying, offsetting whatever merit there was in the Act of June, 1874. "This is a party measure," he scornfully said of it, "the child of a party caucus; it was carried through by a united vote. It promises specie resumption. The promise is so hollow that the avowed opponents of resumption voted for it with their tongues in their cheeks." I cite the brief passage—one of a thousand expressions of the same solicitude for hard money principles—especially for its frank uncovering of the purely political motives underlying the legislation then current. All through 1875, and in the following months as the campaign moved to a climax, he kept close to this text, and in scoring the adjustments of currency tinkering to party purposes he drew every day nearer to the broad line of battle fixed for the presidential year. This was clearly defined by the sentiment of the country at large. It meant a general and definitive overhauling of parties.

The Republican organization was in thoroughly bad shape as the Forty-third Congress faced adjournment. Carl Schurz, from the Senate, wrote to Reid: "The party is just staggering along." As it staggered there were stirrings of hope once more in those independent quarters always favorable to dreams of a complete overturn in the political world, and I must confess that in following the trail of these matters through Reid's private correspondence I would have suffered a certain disappointment if Charles Francis Adams, Jr., had not duly appeared upon the scene. He came, as faithfully as the tides, with a banquet for Schurz in his hands, to speed that statesman on his way to Europe for brief respite from political life. He wanted Reid's aid to launch the banquet in New York, where it was presently given with every element of success. "You must lend a hand to start this thing," he said, "which is to be the nucleus of an 'armed neutrality.'" Incomparable phrase! It was just about this time that neutrality, armed or benevolent, began to go out of fashion. In March the Republicans of New Hampshire won only a partial victory, in the following month the administration was defeated in Connecticut, and in the spring elections generally the Democrats registered an astonishing measure of success. With a Democratic House assembling in December, the Republican party was brought more painfully than ever to realize that it was indeed "time to unload." Even this seemed a hopeless expedient. It was a Republican congressman who admitted in an interview in The Tribune that the members of his party might as well make up their minds that the next President would be a straight-out Democrat, and Thurlow Weed, mournfully descanting at great length on the causes of Republican defeat, could not well say him nay. Neutrality, in this crisis, would not do.

It was a time for new leaders, and these, alas! were slow in forthcoming. Meanwhile Grant, so far as mortal man could see, was in nowise indisposed to go on "leading." In May, when the Republicans of Pennsylvania got together to nominate for the governorship and put an anti-Third Term plank in their platform, the President was at last stung to write the famous disclaimer which he sent to General Harry White. The nubbin of that document resides, however, in the concluding paragraph, where he said: "I would not accept a nomination if it were tendered, unless it should come under such circumstances as to make it an imperative duty, circumstances not likely to arise." Paying his compliments to the "somewhat Delphic phraseology" of the letter, Reid exposed its sophistry. The unconscious disclosures of the message were enough, he thought, to open the eyes of voters and to cause their dismissal of the President from the list of possible candidates for 1876. He saw, in fact, that the Third Term menace was dying down, and, besides, perceived the infinitely greater danger by this time embodied in the inflationists. They were rampant in both parties. In the fall, chances of their triumph in the Ohio elections put even the fear of a third term temporarily out of people's heads. The fight there, peculiarly calculated to have in its results a heavy effect on the national campaign, was ominous in its earlier developments. Hay was in a profound disgust about it. "Think of this state," he said, "with half the Republicans and all the Democrats inflationists at heart, and carrying on a campaign on the bald issue whether the nation shall be a liar and a thief or not. I don't like the job you propose to me of skinning that skunk." Great hopes were built upon Schurz's aid in the skinning. When news came of his returning from Europe, Halstead wrote to Reid from the seat of war, charging him to get hold of the orator and groom him for the fray—if he could be secured for it at all. "I have a late letter from him and he is very particular that his friends shall not commit him. He says, 'Not a word.'" It was Reid's duty to spur him to the utterance of many words, to show him the situation and help in getting him, somehow, on the stump. Schurz landed on September 14th, and in the right mood of susceptibility, for the very next day Reid could report the satisfactory execution of his task, writing to Walter Phelps: "No end of gossip and excitement here over politics and business. Schurz predicts a panic arising from the return of U. S. bonds from Europe in case inflationists carry Ohio. Grosvenor says there is great danger of it. Schurz goes on the stump soon." Apropos of the service he rendered on that proud eminence, and of the auspicious election of Hayes to the governorship, it would seem pertinent here to pass to the matter of Reid's support of Hayes for the presidency. But a question intervenes of some importance in his biography. Why and how did he make the transition from the rôle of an editor, glad to have forwarded Tilden's election as governor, to that of an editor bending all his efforts toward the triumph of his rival in the presidential race?

His independence remained unshaken. I may remark in passing that The Tribune's support of Hayes was never that of a Republican "organ." Even at the close of the Ohio campaign to which I have just alluded, he was as contemptuous as ever of the party's myriad shortcomings. Neither the party nor the administration had done anything during the year to command public confidence or popular support. The moral of the election Reid very curtly stated—it was not so much a Republican victory as a Democratic defeat. Why, then, did he come to repudiate so wholeheartedly the idea which we have seen Watterson suggesting to him, the idea of rallying on Tilden for 1876? The point bears too directly upon principles of independence in journalism and upon his personal relations with the governor for me to neglect it. His reply to Watterson has shown us his indifference to party claims, save as they were to be judged by results actually achieved. In consonance with this view, after the election he went on with Tilden as he had begun, co-operating unreservedly in what promised from the start to be a model administration. The governor had not been in office much above a month before he turned to Reid for aid, as witness the following note from his secretary:

Albany,
February 6th, 1875.

My dear Mr. Reid:

The active and open opposition of the Governor to the Lobby and all its schemes is getting to be very well understood here. . . .

There is nothing that will more surely check bad and corrupt legislation than to have well understood just what the Governor's position is on that subject. No one can make better use of that idea and with more effect upon public opinion than yourself. We hope to see you here on Monday evening at the reception given to Mr. Bryant.

Very truly yours,

W. T. Pelton.

An appeal like this could not but enlist Reid's support, and he was in any case against the dishonest politicians who were banded together as Tilden's foes, both in the Republican camp and within the governor's own party. His most conspicuous work for reform was done in furtherance of the Canal Ring investigation. For weeks and months the paper hammered at that scandal. "We are getting on very well with our investigation," wrote Bigelow, one of Tilden's commissioners, "thanks to your seasonable assistance from time to time," and there was, indeed, not a critical stage in the inquiry at which Reid failed to give instant and abundant support. He backed the governor in the removal bill framed to strengthen his hands for the second and punitive part of the canal crusade; he backed him on smaller but still important issues; and in something like enthusiastic admiration for his reformatory zeal and administrative shrewdness he repeatedly called attention to Tilden's growth as a national figure. Tilden had put his party in a commanding position from which it would not be dislodged except by its own blundering. Tilden's state papers were full of a sagacity which should win him thoughtful attention everywhere. Tilden was, in short, a man with whom it would be well to reckon. Early in the administration, writing to the governor on a crisis which the mayor of New York had provoked, Reid said to him: "It looks like the opportunity to assert fairly your leadership of a real reformed Democracy against the mere place hunters." All his private letters, as well as the editorial page of The Tribune, tend to show how strong was his confidence in Tilden and how far he was willing to go with him along the same road. He could think of him cheerfully for the presidency. As late as the spring of 1876, when writing to the governor about another matter, only two or three days before the Democrats at Utica were to instruct their delegation to vote as a unit for Tilden at St. Louis, Reid could wind up in this sympathetic fashion: "I see that your forecast of a month ago about the State Convention is coming out almost exactly. Mr. Evarts said to me the other day what many men of less political weight and sagacity have been saying for a good while past, that your nomination is almost if not absolutely inevitable. If so, it will take more than a Conkling or Morton to infuse into the contest any of the elements of a race." Yet even while he was writing that cordial tribute in all sincerity and giving editorial approval to the course followed at Utica, Reid was keeping his eye on the progress of inflationism in the Democratic party. With dire rapidity the triumph of that movement sapped all his confidence in the man to whom he had pinned so much faith.

He had written the passage I have just quoted late in April. By the end of June the national Democratic convention at St. Louis had counterbalanced the nomination of Tilden, their strongest man for the presidency, as Reid heartily admitted, by the adoption of a shuffling platform in which resumption was threatened with indefinite postponement, and finally to compromise the ticket a paper-money man was chosen for the vice-presidency in Governor Thos. A. Hendricks, an able and worthy gentleman whose chief popularity nevertheless came from his financial heresies. Reid did not hesitate even overnight. The next morning's editorial page bore this statement of his position:

> We have cordially recognized Gov. Tilden's great services to the State and his eminent fitness for the highest office in the land, and we rejoice that the Democrats have been driven to nominate so admirable a candidate. But yoked with Mr. Hendricks and obstructed by a bad platform, independents cannot take the risk of voting for him. The election of President involves the triumph of a party in Congress and throughout the country and if the inflationists who cowed the Convention and forced upon it a policy which a majority of the delegates knew to be false should gain possession of the House of Representatives, not even the firmness and ability of a President Tilden could save the Union from enormous disaster.

The St. Louis ticket was a ticket to be beaten, and forthwith Reid did what he could to beat it, ceasing to feel much regret over the disillusionment to which Tilden had subjected him as he saw that the Democratic party had found in its nominee not a master but a servant. That was the crux of the situation. If Tilden's leadership had been so asserted at St. Louis as to have put the repudiators in their place with fair indications of their being thenceforth held in check, much might have been forgiven him. It would have implied a moral and political force pushing other indiscretions of his campaign down to the level of minor errors. That he missed his chance to impose authority made only the more ominous his silence on the currency in his speech to the nominating committee, and when at last his formal letter of acceptance promulgated the right principle, his delay in writing it lessened its weight. Walter Phelps thought that Reid was perhaps unduly hard on the Democratic candidate in regard to his famous income tax—on which he was suspected of having acted with something less than complete candor—but if the issue was taken seriously in The Tribune it was because it seemed but another clear manifestation of the weakness revealed by Tilden at St. Louis. The words of the paper in 1874—"Mr. Tilden will make one of the most admirable and irreproachable Governors the State has ever had"—were in no way disconcerting to Reid when they were flung in his teeth in 1876. He reprinted them, willingly, and with the assertion that he had nothing to take back. The point for him, at the later date, was that the question of the moment was of parties, not persons; the Democratic party was floundering about in the morass of soft money, and so far from showing that he could curb it or save the country from the perils of its establishment in power, Tilden threatened to be, as Evarts put it in his speech just before election, "the phantom of Buchanan's likeness in the Presidential chair." Reid's choice, as he made it in this campaign, was to a great extent forced upon him by Tilden himself.

Moreover, as events developed, the independent editors and voters who cooled toward Tilden were presently encouraged to hope that so far from being driven to the risky expedient of a third party, they could count once more on the time-honored alternative to Democratic folly. The Republican party began to show signs of reformation. State conventions came out against the third term. More than one administration leader of "the more odious" type was relegated to his private station. Secretary Bristow's terrific and successful attack upon the Whiskey Ring gave evidence that the administration itself, on occasion, could go in for a drastic bit of housecleaning. The impeachment of Secretary Belknap in the following year afforded further testimony to the growth of a new spirit of reform. Senator Sherman was gradually beating out his policy of resumption, and as he moved toward the goal his party gave more and more promise of moving with him. The great *coup* of the period, which is to say the everlasting dishing of the inflationists, if not actually in sight was foreshadowed on the horizon. The Republicans, always promising to "unload," were pretty nearly ready for the deed. As their national convention approached they proved by regaining lost ground that their party still possessed its historic vitality.

With his political past, Reid could not but find a deep measure of satisfaction in the changes going on about him. He welcomed with the feeling of an old Lincoln man the logic of events beckoning him to the point where he could cheerfully support the candidate of the organization in which he had served his political apprenticeship. Nevertheless, he continued to steer an independent course. Slate-making began early in that campaign. The inventors of presidents were as busy as bees, and like bees they rose up in swarms. Reid declined to join them. "We are not in the business of making candidates," he said. "Whom we shall support in the campaign we do not yet know. It will be that man who best represents the principles of just government, administrative reform, and honesty in the national finances." That was his attitude in February, 1876. The Republican national convention was assembled at Cincinnati in June. It was hardly more than a month ahead of him when he replied in the same detached terms to the friends and correspondents who were writing from all parts of the country to know the probable course of The Tribune. "The simple truth is," he told them, "that The Tribune has no Presidential candidate, as it certainly has no party affiliations nor partisan complications." It was not indeed until the ticket was settled that he committed his paper to a candidate. Then I might say that he burned his bridges if it were not that he had, strictly, no bridges to burn.

The party hack who ventured to hail his advocacy of

Hayes as a sign that he had "returned to the fold" would have received something like a snub for his pains. The reader will recall Reid's letter to Walter Phelps in a preceding chapter, and his observations on "the desire of the Republicans," as he proudly put it, "that The Tribune should give them half a chance to come back to it." He never deceived himself on the sanctity of folds, as folds. "I should like it very much," he wrote, "if our Republican friends would only rub the scales off their eyes far enough to see that we have done and are doing nothing inconsistent with the most absolute fealty to the Republican principles which they learned from The Tribune and which this day have no more staunch defence than its columns afford." His support of a Republican nomination was but the natural sequel to a consistently sustained policy—the moment it could be given as support to sound Republican principles. And as he gave it he retained the privileges of the candid friend.

CHAPTER XX

JAMES G. BLAINE

Reid had, as I have said, no presidential candidate, prior to the convention, but he had, naturally, any number of distinct views on the various men brought into the field, and private communications with some of them. These passages in his biography, like his reaction against Tilden, both illustrate his own character and career, and renew the undercurrents in a chapter of our political history. Through his contacts with the struggle we may apprehend the rise and fall of memorable ambitions, the play of hidden forces, in the great game of politics; some of the piquant personal elements involved in the defeat of Grantism. I have spoken of the want of leaders, which Reid deplored as one of the prime difficulties of the period. Just where the lightning was to strike remained a puzzling problem; how puzzling may be judged from a characteristic anecdote. In the spring of the year, when Blaine's chances were being widely canvassed, Judge Jeremiah Black was said to have met him one day and to have asked him if he felt apprehensive that Senator Morton would defeat him. "Morton will have a fair strength in the convention," was the reply, "but it will not represent a single sure electoral vote. You see it would never do to nominate such a candidate. I'm not at all afraid of him." Neither was he alarmed by the doughty destroyer of the Whiskey Ring. "Bristow," he said, "has a good deal of strength among the people, but it is not organized. I don't see how he can possibly get a majority in the convention." Senator Conkling he dismissed on the ground that he could not carry his own State. His candidacy was an absurdity, nothing more. "Is there anybody you are afraid of?" the judge asked him at last. "Yes, there is," answered Blaine, with a serious air. "The Great Unknown."

True or invented, the story was intensely apposite. It went the rounds with great swiftness, and made a deep impression. Editors in every corner of the country started off in all directions to find the Great Unknown.

The vicissitudes of Blaine's own candidacy are the more provocative of comment in this place because of the subsequent political battles that brought him and Reid together. We can trace in the developments of 1876 the gradual formation of that judgment on Blaine which strengthened Reid in support of him in the great campaign of 1884. Their acquaintance, which dated from old days in Washington, rested in 1876 on a basis of mutual liking which had not, however, ripened into complete intimacy. Their intercourse was cordial, yet it left each with an open mind on the public policy of the other. Nothing is more interesting about it than the plain-speaking by which it was marked. Blaine was a good sportsman. He never balked at frank discussion. Yet his accessibility had its limits, too, a circumstance of which I shall presently give amusing evidence. He hated the invertebrate programmes so often characteristic of academic politics. There was exasperation, for example, always lurking in the possible conduct of those advocates of "armed neutrality" at whom we have already glanced. When one of the most notable "reform" movements of this campaign was launched, a typical ward leader was asked what had been done by Schurz and his colleagues in a certain meeting. "Oh," he said, "they have reenacted the moral law and the Ten Commandments for a platform, and have demanded an angel of light for President." Cruel comment though it was, it pointed to a by no means impossible danger. It was the kind of danger that roused all of Blaine's scorn. Plain-speaking? He indulged himself in it to the full when one unlucky correspondent approached the subject from the wrong angle. He replied in a philippic which made some sensation when it found its way into The Tribune, and which even now is not without its glow of indignant energy:

Washington, D. C.
December 10th, 1875.

My dear Friend:

I shall not lose my patience with you, but another letter of same purport from anyone else will certainly try my temper—which has already been put to the test by two similar raids upon it. I met Bowles of the Springfield "Republican" a few weeks since in Maine on his return from a Moosehead Lake tour, and rode with him for a day Boston-wards. He improved the occasion by assuring me that I had no chance for the Presidency but that I might do a great thing for myself and my country by openly espousing the cause of Charles Francis Adams. Shortly afterwards Charles Nordhoff wrote the same thing in substance on both points—urging me to "see Adams at once, ally myself with him, and make myself chief of his party."

From Nordhoff, whom I like, this mild nonsense may be tolerated; but from Bowles, whom nobody likes, it is quite unendurable. I replied to Nordhoff in writing as I did to Bowles in conversation, without mincing my words, and I shall do you the same favor. I assured Nordhoff that he could not have a lower estimate of my personal prospects than I had myself—that in fact the subject never entered my mind as one of serious promise—and I am sure I told you at Saratoga in August last that my nomination was not within the scope of remote probabilities—scarcely of possibilities. You need not therefore try so gingerly to let me down without hurting, for I really never felt that I was up.

But the cant and the nonsense which Bowles and Nordhoff and yourself put forward about Adams as the coming man both amuse and enrage me. When he comes the Republican party is gone. It would not be Adams' fall but his rise that would ruin us. No Adams ever yet headed a party without taking the life out of it. Old John —in many respects the best of them—took the Federal party in 1796 when it had the talent, the character, the culture, the wealth and the patriotic traditions and prejudices of the country all largely in its favor, and in four years he so entirely destroyed it that it never reappeared except as a ghost wherewith to frighten two succeeding generations of statesmen. A large part of the quarter century that he lived after he retired from the Presidency, was spent in querulous efforts to throw the responsibility of his failures on the friends of Hamilton and the eleven other contrary jurymen.

John Quincy Adams was equally unfortunate with the Republican party of his day. When he was inaugurated in 1825 there was no other political organization in the country, and a wise leader of men and of parties would have found no difficulty in harmonizing the personal feuds which were permitted to grow into such fearful magnitude and acquire such destructive force. Indeed the Administration of the second Adams so entirely wrecked the great Republican party which Monroe left, that it never was heard from again except under an alias. Had John Quincy Adams died the day he left the Presidency he would never have filled the prominent place to which he is entitled in our history. He would simply have been known as a child of political fortune—always in office no matter which party was in power—head of an Administration which was remarkable only for its failures, author of a diary conspicuous only for its malignity, sire to a son unwise enough to publish it. The last seventeen years of his life, spent in the House of Representatives, all but one year in the opposition, developed those qualities and gave him those opportunities which secure him his fame. It is in that field alone that the present generation know him, and Mr. Seward when he wrote the biography of "the old man eloquent" (he never was eloquent when young!) devoted more space to his service in the House than to all the preceding history of his official life, which may be said to have begun about the time he was weaned. As an Executive he was as utter a failure as his father.

Don't talk to me then, I pray, about nominating Charles Francis Adams as our candidate for the Presidency unless you mean death for us without resurrection. The Republican party can be beaten under some candidate in 1876 and still have a future—but if it should win with Adams it would never breathe again. The day of his inauguration would be the day of its funeral. He is not the equal in talent of his father or grandfather, and though I have a very slight personal acquaintance with him, I judge him to have a plentiful supply of those qualities which made the two Adamses the conspicuous failures among our early Presidents, and a great lack of those characteristics which, with all their faults and failures as executives, still made them justly illustrious in our annals.

The Presidents who were great leaders of men and of parties have been our successful Presidents, Washington and Jefferson, among the early Presidents, Jackson and Lincoln at later periods, are the most shining examples. Among the men who possessed in a preeminent degree the talent and aptitude for the station were Hamilton, De Witt Clinton, Henry Clay, Seward, and Stephen A. Douglas. But in not a single quality of any one of them can you find the least counterpart in Charles Francis Adams. *Stat magni nominis umbra.* And only the shadow!

Very sincerely yours,
J. G. Blaine.

The outlook for Blaine's candidacy was, as a matter of fact, not at all unfavorable at the time this letter was written. Then he raised a tremendous tempest in the House by his speech on the Amnesty Bill, the speech in which he demanded the exclusion of Jefferson Davis from the provisions of the act on the ground of his responsibility for the horrors of Andersonville. Amnesty Reid considered a dead issue, anyway, and Blaine's waving of the bloody shirt he thought not an argument but an exhibition of parliamentary fence. In The Tribune he was tart on the subject. Mr. Blaine was at the moment the most conspicuous candidate in his party for the presidency, and the best judges were inclined to think the most of his chances. But he could throw all away by a few more such fiery appeals to partisanship. The country didn't want the healing wounds of the war torn open afresh. Shortly after this, when some unscrupulous opponents were trying to impugn Blaine's religious belief, he asked Reid to print an explanation from a clergyman friend. In replying Reid took occasion to return to the Amnesty speech:

New York,
January 23rd, 1876.

My dear Mr. Blaine:

Yes, I will print the Pittsburgh letter with pleasure. I do not myself, however, believe that the story was likely to hurt you. What will hurt you, however, is the evident concentration on a Western candidate, and the defection already apparent in Pennsylvania and in New England, which in part at least must be due to the Amnesty business. Considered solely with reference to its political bearing the Amnesty movement may have been a shrewd stroke for the

South, but I cannot help thinking that the debate which your Andersonville charge provoked has damaged you with the class of men whose support you most wanted in New England. On this point, however, I find shrewd politicians differing from me.

Very truly yours,

WHITELAW REID.

If Reid, having no candidate, was looking for one, this letter scarcely suggests that he was ready to bank on Blaine as a likely winner in the race. Meanwhile his correspondence shows some curious movements on the horizon. From Bigelow came this arresting epistle:

Albany,
January 21st, 1876.

MY DEAR REID:

I learn today that Grant has formally signified to Senator Conkling and others that he will not be a candidate nor accept a renomination for the Presidency. I learn also from an equally and entirely satisfactory source that Conkling has formally avowed his purpose to be a candidate and has already begun the organization of his campaign. You will soon find the confirmation of this in the Republican papers that have a party authority. Grant has thrown his truncheon towards none of his following in particular but it requires no effort of imagination to conceive that he is grateful for Conkling's forbearance until he, Grant, withdrew. The chances are that the organization will prove at least as favorable to C. as to any one, which is enough to ensure his nomination. This will also tend I should say to compel the nomination of Tilden, by "the fierce Democracie." For with whom else could there be any hope of carrying New York. The State of New York has a fair prospect of being the battleground of '76.

Faithfully yours,

JOHN BIGELOW.

Reid promptly put these quaint tidings in the forefront of his political news; but his opinion of Conkling's candidacy was about that attributed to Blaine in the colloquy with Judge Black. How they were both confirmed in the convention may be inferred from the figures. On the first ballot, the one most flattering to his pretensions, Conkling received the magnificent tribute of ninety-nine votes. Replying to Bigelow, Reid thus summed up the situation as it then looked to him:

New York,
January 24th, 1876.

My dear Mr. Bigelow:

You will have seen before this what use I made of your letter concerning Conkling. I don't believe that his candidacy is going to produce much effect. He has no strength outside of this State and not much in it. Still if he can secure the choice of delegates by the State Convention, he would get the State. Thurlow Weed says the nominations of both parties are going to the West. Gov. Morgan says the same thing. Other long-headed politicians still think Blaine has a show. Tilden stock doesn't seem just now to be on the rise, though its time may come.

Very truly yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

While the politicians were racking their brains with the presidential problem, some sentiment was developing outside their circles in favor of Benjamin H. Bristow. It was a healthy sentiment. The secretary of the treasury had acquired the *kudos* which belongs to the successful ring-breaker and the value of this, politically, was not to be despised. Reid was not precisely enthusiastic. He did not believe that the popular furor really marked Bristow as the ideal statesman. He was not at all sure that either experience or natural abilities had fitted him to measure up to the requirements of the presidential office. Still, he discussed this candidacy not unsympathetically, a fact which appears to have got a little on the nerves of John Hay, who wrote to him about Bristow in this vein: "His one sole public act is the prosecution of the Whiskey Ring. It is enough to make him a Governor, if he could carry his own State, and might honestly win him the Vice-Presidency. But twenty men are ready to work for Blaine to one for Bristow. Blaine has shown positive capacity for government and Bristow has not. Besides this, Blaine is the only serious candidate against the Grant faction. He has more friends by far than any two of the others, but perhaps the field, if united, can beat him. Cameron, Morton, Logan and Hayes may keep their delegations from Blaine, but it will be in the interest of some dirty trade. I cannot help shivering at the prospect of being compelled next fall to choose between Morton and Hendricks, both citizens of mee native State." Hay's argument is characteristic of the good-will which the best men in the country were giving to Blaine. His strength increased every day. And yet the leaders could not tell. The observations of Weed and Morgan, glanced at in the letter to Bigelow just cited, come up again in a long report of Reid's to Murat Halstead about a conference with those two stanch and anxious Republicans. Weed, inclining to Bristow, also had what seemed to Reid an exaggerated view of the chances of Elihu B. Washburne, of Illinois. This candidate, he thought, would have the benefit of Grant's support. Reid told him that for six months Washburne's personal friends had been stating as a positive fact that he felt unkindly toward Grant and believed Grant felt unkindly toward him. Weed believed that Washburne had a strong hold on the German vote, but from Schurz, who was surely in a position to know, Reid had received a directly contrary assurance on this point. The presidential views of that statesman, by the way, are tersely stated in this letter. "Schurz," wrote Reid to Halstead, "as you know doubtless far better than I, is warmly in favor of Bristow and vehemently opposed to Blaine."

To increase the density of the political atmosphere in which every one was groping at this time, Washington supplied a sensation of the first order. The administration suffered another scandal in the impeachment of General Belknap, its secretary of war, in the matter of moneys alleged to have been paid for a post-tradership in the West. It was an old story, which The Tribune, as it happened, had brought to light in 1872, a circumstance which ultimately led to Reid's being summoned as a witness at the trial. On its breaking out afresh he was deeply impressed by the setback it threatened to give the Republican campaign, and among other things he noted that it boded ill for Blaine's candidacy. This point recurs in the further correspondence with Hay which perpetually revolves around the prospects of the Maine statesman:

New York,
March 14th, 1876.

My dear Hay:

What do you think of Blaine now? It seems to me that the tide is now running very strongly, both East and West, in favor of Bristow, and that if Bowles hadn't so vulgarized the name of Adams we might even have a chance for such a ticket as Adams and Bristow. Still, this is surface enthusiasm, while far down below the surface Blaine's machinery is at work, fastening the delegates. If Blaine should be the candidate, on the one side, however, and Tilden on the other, Blaine would probably find that the odium of the Belknap business and his own leadership in the party without protest against the course of the Administration, would carry him down. He could not carry New York, and I don't believe he could be elected. If he had only done one or two plucky things instead of being forever a partisan,—he is an abler man than Bristow and would probably make a better President. Personally it would be an easy thing for me to support him. Indeed up to this time it was the easiest thing to do, but I don't believe I am mistaken as to the set of the present popular tide. Tell me how it strikes you.

Faithfully yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

Hay's faith remained unshaken. He couldn't but go on wishing for Blaine's nomination, and cited in support of his views the opinion of a kinsman of his well qualified to report on public sentiment in his Western State. "Blaine is nothing to him," wrote Hay, "any more than to me or you. I am only anxious for myself to have a man on one ticket or the other for whom I can vote without nausea, and you only want one whom The Tribune can support with self-respect." As the campaign progressed he became only the more convinced, writing in April: "If anybody wants a better pair of candidates than Tilden and Blaine, the two most promising politicians of the two parties, he must wait till he gets to heaven—and finds an absolute monarchy. Better men than these are not given to Republics." If Reid in his turn was not so convinced it is, on the other hand, important to note here that he was not stampeded in the direction that he might have been expected to take when the campaign grew hotter and Blaine's enemies sought to do their worst against him. They revived the old charges of corruption in railroad matters. In 1872, when The Tribune had given credence to those charges, and presently found that it had been made the victim of a clerical blunder involving a mistake in identity, the paper published a full retraction. In 1876 the renewal of the scandal only defeated its own purposes.

Reid accepted Colonel Scott's exoneration of Blaine as ending the Union Pacific business forever. Later, in June, the episode of the Mulligan letters momentarily disturbed him. He saw that no matter what private judgment might be, the only thing for Blaine to do, if he was to allay the doubts in the public mind, was manfully to bear the ordeal by fire placed before him. He knew that his friend had, as he expressed it, a capacity for shedding scandal equal to that of any ten of his enemies for inventing it, and he divined in this affair, as in the subsequent effort to make political capital out of Blaine's fainting-fit in Washington, the same meanness of "manslaughter in politics" which he had witnessed in the case of Greeley. But he was worried—worried for Blaine and worried for the campaign. The politicians in

New York were talking of Blaine as out of the field, they were wondering if he took the same view himself, and they were asking if he could control any considerable part of his strength in the impending convention. If he could swing that strength, upon whom would the advantages of it be conferred? Reid's correspondence shows what agitation prevailed in New York political circles. Also, it shows the determined efforts he made to get at the bottom facts himself, and to do what he could to save the situation. When it was saved by Blaine's dramatic victory in the House, through the reading of the letters and the exposition of their meaning, which answered all the innuendoes of his antagonists, Reid's emotion of relief was not political alone—the personal element counted heavily.

A confidence developed in adversity has a durableness of its own. In Reid's sympathetic yet cool and even detached observation of Blaine during those critical weeks of 1876, the observation of a man concerned not with special pleading, but with evidence, we may discern the seeds of the complete understanding which marked their relations in later years. He was not swayed by impulse. It was the thoughtful, reasoned nature of his backing that fixed its value. But there was heart in his attitude, also. I have recalled his scorn of the ignoble nature of some of the attacks upon Greeley. It sprang both from his love of fair play and from his sensitiveness for a friend. His support of Blaine had the same dual origin. Of the expressions of appreciation which it drew forth none touched him more than the following:

Yale College,
June 8th, 1876.

Whitelaw Reid, Esq.

Sir:

As one wholly unknown to you except by name and connection, permit me to thank you for the very noble and manly course which

The Tribune has taken. I feel that very much of the sudden reversion in public feeling, the successful turning-back of a tide of unwarrantable and unfounded calumny, which at one time almost threatened to hide beneath its slime an honorable reputation fairly and justly earned, is due to the course of the journal which you so worthily edit. It is difficult for a man's children to bear with patience the smallest amount of unjust criticism, of a Father, of one whom they have always found more than honorable and generous. Children still love a Father, though he be a culprit on the gallows, or a wretch publicly branded as a thief; and the world honors the devotion and the sentiment. Imagine then how painful and distressing must have been the attacks, wholly malicious and unfounded, which have been aimed with diabolical intent at my Father during the past week!

Permit me then as the eldest son to thank you for the justice, kindness and sympathy which you have publicly displayed towards Mr. Blaine, and to assure you that the gratitude for your course will not pass away with this written expression. With the deepest feelings of gratitude, I have the honor, Sir, to be,

Your very obedient servant,
WALKER BLAINE.

At the moment, though fixed in his resolution to choose no candidate, Reid certainly put Blaine's chances in the fairest possible light. Blaine had seized his opportunity and was once more the man of the hour. The patriots who had been parting his garments among them would be well advised to abandon that cheerful task. The revulsion in his favor was instantaneous and overwhelming. If he was the strongest candidate a week ago, he was stronger on the morrow of his cruel test. He had done far more than simply to disprove the allegations against him. That, indeed, he had done thoroughly. The letters about which Mulligan had declared that Blaine was ready to commit suicide, had been given to the world, and they were seen to be harmless. But in war it had always been held a wise rule to do what your enemy doesn't want, and the upshot of the conspiracy had been to show just what the Democracy didn't want. It didn't want Blaine to be the Republican nominee. It had no fear of any of the others. It had attacked none of the others. Blaine, and Blaine alone, it had sought to remove from the track. Thereby it had given the Republicans a valuable hint. Blaine was to be counted from that day a stronger candidate for the support of the Republican party than he had been at any time since his candidacy was first mentioned.

Charles Nordhoff wrote to Reid from the scene of Blaine's triumph prognosticating the possible results in the convention. "Even his opponents were ready to admit that he had been abused. It is too early to tell what will be the result on the country; but if his friends are active there is no reason to doubt that he ought to go to Cincinnati very strong, strong enough to go in. The letters show absolutely no wrong, but some imprudence, and the people will fall in. That is my present belief, and so far as I could hear on the floor and elsewhere this evening, the general and indeed universal belief; and this I mean of the politicians. Blaine I haven't seen yet. He does not give up by any means; did not I mean before this. He doesn't mean to give up, and has not yet contemplated it. I ought to say that I did give up B. as out of the canvass, till today. I count him in very largely now."

No candidate stormed with obloquy at the eleventh hour ever received a finer tribute than was given to Blaine at Cincinnati a week after his great battle. As the convention assembled it seemed from the demeanor of an astonishingly large number of delegates as if his fight for the nomination had really been won when the House had adjourned and the report of his speech on the letters had gone to the country. The early ballots bade fair to confirm this judgment. From the start Blaine enthusiasm was a little more than articulate, and it rose swiftly enough to the pitch of delirium. But Conkling, his mortal enemy, who he had thought could not carry his own State, held the New York delegation, and though he could not profitably use it for himself he could keep it out of Blaine's hands, a circumstance having due weight as the forces of the different contestants waxed and waned, and the period of compromise set in. Once that period was reached, the commanding eligibility of Hayes became manifest. He had no bitter enemies in his own party. There were no past controversies the revival of which would have placed him on the defensive. Wheeler, the running mate chosen for him, was in the same secure case. They made an auspicious because thoroughly safe pair, and that was what the party wanted.

Bromley, reviewing the convention after the dust had subsided, recognized as its most thrilling moment that in which the furor for Blaine swelled to its climax. It was then that Ingersoll coined the phrase destined to a robust life in our political nomenclature, figuring Blaine as a leader of leaders, standing in the midst of his foes like an armed warrior or "plumed knight," and hurling his glittering lance. The house shook under tempests of prolonged applause, in which even the enemies of this candidate participated. It was Bromley's opinion that Blaine would have received the nomination if the convention had been governed by its emotions. But it wasn't. He compared it with the great gathering at Chicago in 1860. "That was a convention with the inspiration of a great work before it; this, one with the consciousness of a past for which to make amends. It was the difference, in short, between the promise of youth and the remorse and penitence of premature age. That there were both the consciousness of error and some signs of penitence were the most encouraging symptoms of returning moral health." The hour had come, the hour in which to "unload," in which the party could only hope to win by nominating a ticket essentially above disparagement, a ticket on which not even the most disgruntled Republicans in the Independent camp could throw the faintest shadow of a doubt. Reid, like most of his political intimates, could not but feel that just such a ticket had been framed in the nomination of Hayes and Wheeler.

He engaged in the campaign for it grievously burdened by private circumstances. In June he lost one of those nieces and wards of his to whom he was devoted, Gavin's elder daughter, Caroline; and a few months later his sister Chestina died. But in his reply to a friend who had written him on these misfortunes there is a very characteristic sentence—"It has been a pretty hard summer, and nowadays the chief comfort I get is in burying myself in hard work." He worked, indeed, with perhaps a little more than his usual energy in the critical months of 1876. How critical they were he saw not only as a judge of the inflationist peril thinly concealed behind the St. Louis ticket but as an unprejudiced observer of Democratic strength. When the issue was drawn he bent all his efforts toward warning Republican leaders against the error of underrating their opponents. It was a mistake, he thought, to attach overmuch importance to Democratic dissensions. They nearly always ended after the manner of cat fights. Hendricks and repudiation would go far to reconcile Western opposition, and Tilden's professions of hard money and reform might be expected to count heavily in the East, carrying New York and Connecticut. His letters, like the editorial page of The Tribune, are full of this subject. Confidence in the candidate he now had at last did not lull his vigilance. Meanwhile it was a boon to have so satisfying a man to support.

The Republican nominee's letter of acceptance, unequivocal and stirring both on the financial question and on civil service reform, was like a cup of clear cold water after the sickly brews of Grantism and the decidedly "mixed" drink proffered by the Democracy. Schurz wrote with unusual fervor. Doubts had been floating around as to whether he was going to support the ticket or not. Of course he was going to support it, heartily and actively, and never had he felt more clearly conscious of doing the right thing for the best interests of the party. "Is not Hayes's manifesto a good thing?" he asked, and Reid thus replied:

New York,
July 12th, 1876.

DEAR GENERAL:

Yes; I think Hayes' letter on the whole the most judicious and satisfactory thing thus far on either side of this canvass. He said to a personal friend of mine a day or two before the publication of the letter, in answer to the inquiry—"Will not what you have said offend some of the machine men?"—"Well, I must offend somebody, I suppose, and I had rather offend them than the men whom this letter will please." He will do.

Very truly yours, WHITELAW REID.

Hayes would do, but in that same week Reid wrote to Garfield, saying: "I have meant to write to Gov. Hayes but have thus far been too busy. If you are writing to him, pray say to him frankly that the Democrats are confident of carrying both Ohio and Indiana in October. Tilden himself is very confident of election, and he is not generally over-sanguine, or likely to express opinions without very careful examination of the reasons for them." Garfield was no less anxious. He was disturbed by news that the Democrats were making heavy inroads among the German voters in Ohio, and said to Reid: "Our friends will make a great mistake if they fail to recognize the fact that we are entering upon a very close and doubtful fight." To the nominee himself Reid finally wrote with the frankness justified by their long acquaintance. He knew his man. In a letter that fall from W. D. Howells, the latter says: "I have found your 'Ohio in the War' of the greatest use to me in writing my life of Hayes." Reid had understood the soldier and he now went straight to the point with the politician:

New York,
July 21st, 1876.

My dear Sir:

I want to thank you very heartily for your admirable letter of acceptance. If it had been specially designed to enable The Tribune, and those for whom it speaks, to make their support of you effective, it could not have better accomplished the purpose.

But you ought to know, and your friends directing the canvass ought to be thoroughly alive to the fact, that the leading Democrats here believe they have grounds for confidently expecting success. For instance, there is no reason why I should not mention to you, confidentially, the fact that when I was dining a few days ago with Mr. Abram S. Hewitt, the Chairman of the National Democratic Committee, he told me that the Democrats believed they had grounds for expecting the vote of Ohio in October. I am sure he didn't say it in any spirit of brag, or for any other reason than because he believed it.

Gov. Tilden, too, is singularly confident, and my experience with him has led me to regard him as the most sagacious political calculator I have ever seen.

On the other hand, I have reason to think that Tilden is very much embarrassed by Hendricks' position, and has been sending peremptory messages to Washington against the repeal of the Resumption act of '75.

Very truly yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

Gov. R. B. Hayes,
Columbus, O.

The governor was of a more optimistic turn of mind. With his equable temperament he was prepared to look composedly upon almost any developments in the contest, and as a matter of fact he felt fairly secure. He replied thus:

Columbus, Ohio.
July 25th, 1876.

My dear Sir:

I am glad you endorse the letter. It seemed to me that its doctrines would, if need be, stand defeat. I have long since got over all tendency to panic because of Democratic professions of confidence. They study it as an art. It is also a test of orthodoxy. A Democrat loses caste with his fellows if he doesn't brag on the prospects. Thank you for the letter, and the good things you are doing.

Sincerely,

R. B. Hayes.

Whitelaw Reid, Esq.

Here was a candidate who at all events went into the fight with the spirit that wins. He had, from time to time, to be warned against his own confidence—quite as thoroughgoing in its way as Tilden's—but there was a calm, quiet strength about his conviction in which Republicans could not but recognize a good omen.

CHAPTER XXI

THE DISPUTED ELECTION

The good things which Hayes congratulated Reid upon doing embraced the advancement of arguments bearing upon the campaign at large, East and West, but he agreed with Bigelow in identifying New York as the battle-ground, and a large amount of his energy was given to State politics. In that field particular interest attaches to his promotion of the candidacy of William M. Evarts for the governorship. The selection of A. B. Cornell, strongly advocated in machine quarters, hardly seemed propitious in a presidential year, when it was of the utmost importance to save the State for the party. To that end a man of the caliber of Evarts was clearly needed. Reid's campaign for the great lawyer was not confined to the editorial page of The Tribune. It included much personal exhortation of Evarts himself and frequent consultation with State leaders. Amongst the latter General E. A. Merritt was ardent for this candidacy and convinced that it would make headway at Saratoga, but he and Reid had to labor heroically in order to protect it against itself. Evarts consistently shrank from any decisive appearance as a competitor. The movement in his favor was tangible, a movement for all men to see, and his friends were zealous in openly keeping it going—yet he would not commit himself.

Down to very nearly the last minute Evarts was resolved to stay foot-free, where Reid was resolved that he should enlist in the fight, and the result makes a pretty picture of the conflict of wills. They had been good friends for so long that they could argue over the matter without much ceremony, and in the closing days of the affair their relations suggest those of two amiable fencers. Reid's letters to Merritt at this time are like bulletins from the field of honor. The convention at Saratoga was set for August 24th. On the 18th Reid writes: "Mr. Evarts will not say anything on the subject beforehand, but if properly nominated he will accept." Two days later he reports only dubious progress. "He is full of the idea of declining to be a candidate. I put it to him strongly that he could not now withdraw after what Choate and others had said for him, without placing his supporters in an awkward position and giving them just cause of complaint. He is to see me again tonight, unless he concludes to delay action until the Convention. My judgment still is that he can be nominated and elected, and I hope he may come to it, too." The results of the interview here foreshadowed are set forth in a letter too full of Reid's political ardor to be omitted:

New York,
August 21st, 1876.

Dear General:

Mr. Evarts has fully made up his mind to decline a nomination. A letter to that effect is written, and will be in Mr. Curtis's hands with instructions to present it either before or after the nomination.

In talking the matter over with Evarts I made all the representations I could as to the injurious effect of this course, and finally said that if I were in Mr. Curtis's place, and found the situation what I now believe it to be, I would pocket the letter and make the nomination all the same. He replied that that would place him in a very embarrassing position; to which I answered, it would place him in a position where he couldn't refuse to accept. Without directly and seriously assenting to this, he did leave on my mind the impression that he could not deny it.

I do think it of the utmost importance to have Evarts nominated. He complains that he has not been more formally solicited to be a candidate by leaders of the party, and that a nomination over the heads of Conkling & Co., instead of at their request would only widen breaches instead of healing them. I don't see the force of this but its bearing on the work of the Convention is clear. If he is to be nominated at all, it ought to be done handsomely, and the movement ought, if possible, to come from some conspicuous man on Conkling's side.

If Cornell or Andrew D. White is nominated, I think the Liberal Republicans, Independent Republicans, and others of that class, ought to issue a call for a new Convention to meet 10 days or 2 weeks hence, to support Hayes and Wheeler and nominate a State ticket.

In great haste,
Very truly yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

Gen. E. A. Merritt.

With the final plea described in the foregoing, Reid felt that he had exhausted his resources, and retired in good order to await the outcome. He had not, as that showed, reasoned altogether in vain. When it came to the turn of George William Curtis to rise from amongst the delegates at Saratoga and take the platform he drew no disconcerting letter from his pocket. Instead, he placed the name of Evarts in nomination, winning thereby "great and continued applause," and to that extent Reid's candidate was brought, in the long run, to figure harmoniously in the situation. It was something. As Walter Phelps wrote, watching the fray from afar off in Paris: "He didn't do the worst. He might have withdrawn before the Convention, and that The Tribune could never have forgiven." By allowing the nomination to be made Evarts did much to raise the tone of the convention, and though the party managers rejected him they at least had the wit to take in his place not Cornell but Governor E. D. Morgan, and with that substitution Reid was, after all, well content. "The support of Mr. Evarts made the success of ex-Gov. Morgan possible," he said in The Tribune the next day, "and, next to the choice of Mr. Evarts himself, we count that of Gov. Morgan the best that could have been made." It was not ratified, to be sure, at the polls in November.

But at the moment it was reassuring, and Reid accepted it in the cheerfulest of spirits.

So, likewise, did Evarts. At Saratoga, when the roll-call on the single ballot taken had revealed Morgan's commanding lead, Curtis had moved to make his nomination unanimous, offering the proposal in the name of his own candidate. With what philosophical approval Evarts contemplated this and all the other developments of that adventure upon which he had so unwillingly embarked is suggested by the following amusing epistle:

Windsor, Vermont.
August 24th, 1876.

Dear Mr. Reid:

"*Conventio vincit legem.*" The politicians beat the lawyer.
"All things work together for good to them that fear God."
"Whom the Gods love die easy."
"A man born to be hanged will never be drowned."
"Thy faith has saved thee."
"Behold the ram in the thicket."

With many thanks for your kind attendance through the valley and shadow of this second death,

Yours very truly,
Wm. M. Evarts.

In his reply Reid added to this sheaf of biblical quotations. "'Blessed are the meek,'" he reminded Evarts, "'for they shall inherit the earth.' I had no idea you could string together so much good Scripture in favor of the meekness, not to say the joy, with which you greet the Saratoga outcome."

It was just at this time that Reid received from Howells, then editing the "Atlantic Monthly," a request with which we cannot but wish he had complied. "Can you let me promise in our prospectus for next year," asked his friend, "an article from you on the editorial management of a metropolitan newspaper?" If he had written it he could have shown how wide is the scope of such management, the political aspects of the subject alone illustrating the extent to which the journalist is also the man of action. The Evarts episode was followed by one in which Reid appears as the counsellor of Levi P. Morton, presiding in a measure over that gentleman's political début. Morton was appointed financial chairman by the Republican National Committee, and first turned to Reid in that rôle, seeking aid in the composition of what he wanted to make "ringing appeals." From these, presently, he passed to a more personal subject. In the fall of 1876 he was offered the nomination for Congress from the eleventh district in New York. He had not been disposed to entertain it, but at the same time he had thought a good deal about going out of business and wondered what Reid would advise him to do. "If elected," he said, "and I wanted a foreign mission, could I well resign and accept that, or if defeated, what then? I have never made a speech in my life." Reid told him not to worry about the speechmaking. Men were wanted in Congress who understood business, whether they made speeches or not. He pointed out that Morton couldn't resign after election without making a good deal of ill feeling, especially if he subjected the people to the expense of another ballot before the next fall. On the central point of the matter he said: "If you don't mind being defeated, and do want to help the party, then it would be a good thing to take the nomination even if the chances were clearly against success. There is no doubt that your nomination would very greatly strengthen the Republican chances in that district." The hesitating candidate took Reid's advice, and, making the canvass, repeatedly came back for more. He lost the race, but it was only by a small margin, and in polling a vote greater by more than four thousand than that received by the previous Republican candidate, he had the satisfaction of rendering a certain help to the party, as Reid had told him he would do. Like Evarts, he felt in defeat only gratitude toward his sponsor. After the returns were in he wrote to express his thanks. "You could not have done more for a brother," he said. He saw the larger, strategical purpose which Reid had all along had in mind, and passing from the matter of his own fortunes he added: "If Hayes is elected the Republican party will owe a debt of gratitude to you for your invaluable service." If it was invaluable it was because it left no stone unturned to assist the triumph of the national ticket. I have recited these two incidents, the candidacies of Evarts and Morton, simply as pertinent to the exposition of Reid's broader activities in the campaign of 1876. They illustrate his method in a political fight, his watchfulness over every point in the line, his care for skirmishes that might contribute to the success of the main action.

There were temptations, early in the fall, to believe that the line was safe. The Democrats played straight into the hands of the Republicans when at their State convention they nominated Seymour for the governorship. "It scarcely looks," wrote Evarts to Reid, "as if Providence was on Tilden's side. The Seymour affair is a monstrous weakness whichever way it turns." In Reid's opinion the nomination of "the candidate of Vallandigham" meant that, automatically, Tilden was himself beaten, and the Seymour declination hardly bettered the Democratic situation. The substitution in his place of the unexceptionable Lucius Robinson was only too plainly a case of window-dressing, of what in the slang of to-day would be termed political camouflage. In September, too, the Maine elections rolled up an auspicious Republican majority. Blaine, who was working hard up there, sent Reid a private despatch which rang like a trumpet: "Our victory runs far beyond our calculations.

We have made a clean sweep of all the Congressional districts, and all the counties in the state." He followed this up with a cordial recognition of The Tribune's part in the work:

Augusta, Maine.
September 13th, 1876.

Dear Sir:

We are feeling well here over the great victory we gained on Monday—and before the matter grows cold I desire to say to you that the Republicans of Maine fully appreciate the course of The Tribune. You did us immense service not only in holding firmly those Republicans who supported Mr. Greeley in 1872 but in the wise direction you gave to the general campaign. I feel well assured that wherever your circulation is largest, Republican gains will be the most marked and the prospective success of Gov. Hayes will be due in very large part to the efforts and influence of The Tribune.

Very truly yours,
J. G. Blaine.

The auguries were good. Reid could be a little more sanguine at this time in his communications with Hayes. "We have no sort of doubt now," he wrote, "about the result in New York, and are greatly gratified at the manifest strength of your nomination, which every week of the canvass only more clearly reveals." The governor's reply is equally spirited. "The impression seems to be general," he says, "that the tide is with the Republicans. No good thing can come from a Democratic victory gained by means of a United South. This is the sentiment that is growing and winning. Our advices from the East concur with your opinion that New York is safe, unless both Ohio and Indiana are carried by the Democrats in October, by decided majorities." In the State elections the Republicans won Ohio but lost Indiana, and in the face of this rather disconcerting development Governor Morgan carried on his campaign in New York with far less vigor than Reid thought necessary. Promptly he took up again his task of uttering warnings against undue confidence. "Neither Gov.

Morgan nor any of the Republicans appreciate," he wrote to his friend S. J. Bowen, "the elaborate and painstaking nature of Gov. Tilden's canvass of this state. I have gone through two such canvasses with him, and know how complete his preparations are. Nothing on the Republican side has been done at all comparable to his work in thoroughness or minuteness of detail. I don't think much of his organization in other states, because he doesn't understand them so well; but in New York of all the politicians I have ever seen he is the supreme organizer." His correspondence with Wheeler shows that they were both alarmed over the efficiency of Democratic propaganda in New York and the extent to which the Republican State Committee had allowed the campaign to drift, expecting Republican success in Ohio and Indiana to carry them through. "The past week or ten days," Reid wrote late in October, "I have been doing what I could in a private way (and a little in The Tribune) to give the Republican leaders a wholesome scare."

His political judgment was never more emphatically confirmed than at this time. The scare he sought to communicate was heightened by the event. Tilden carried his State by a majority of some thirty thousand, and the morning after election it looked as if he had carried the nation. The Tribune so stated the results on that day. But the first results were accepted with prophetic reserves, and in fact it was at this point that Reid lifted his paper to a new plane of influence through the manner in which he governed its utterances on an extraordinarily difficult situation. With the dramatic conclusion of the campaign of 1876—which was not so much a conclusion as it was the prelude to an even more bitter contest—he brought The Tribune back into the fullest exercise of its power in Republican councils. The date is happily suggestive, marking as it does an anniversary of Reid's entrance into political life. In 1856, in his youth, he had gone on the stump for Fremont, and since then he had witnessed not only the triumph of Republican principles as it was embodied in the rise of Lincoln and the successful prosecution of the war, but the swift declension of the party under the maladministration of Grant. In 1876, as the Republicans once more came forward really to serve the nation, Reid, in his prime, had the opportunity to share in the work.

Concerned as I am primarily with his share in that work, I need make no apology for referring the reader to other sources for an exhaustive study of the disputed election. The theme is still debated with unalterable convictions on both sides. As recently as 1913, Colonel Watterson, who was chairman at the St. Louis convention in 1876, opened his "Century" article on the contest with the observation that "the time is coming, if it has not already arrived, when among fair-minded and intelligent Americans there will not be two opinions touching the Hayes-Tilden contest for the Presidency in 1876–77—that both by the popular vote and a fair count of the electoral vote Tilden was elected and Hayes was defeated." In his rejoinder to this paper, Senator Edmunds, who had served on the Electoral Commission, was equally confident that Hayes "was lawfully elected and instituted to the office by fair and lawful means." I certainly shall not attempt to hold the scales between these two oracles. But some light on their problem may nevertheless be struck here and there from an exposition of Reid's relation to it. He was not, like either Watterson or Edmunds, in Congress, but perhaps that very fact enabled him to take the more dispassionate a view of a controversy that was peculiarly inflamed with passion. It is interesting, at all events, to note as the first of his traits as they are disclosed in this matter an open-mindedness which commended the policy of The Tribune, when the storm was at its fiercest, alike to friend and foe. If he came to believe absolutely that Hayes was entitled to the election, he could claim to have arrived at that conclusion without prejudice.

It was not by any means in a spirit of partisanship that he turned to the support of the Republican candidate. The testimony to this which appears in the files of The Tribune receives interesting confirmation in his private papers. I may cite, for example, a characteristic note from W. C. Whitney, then corporation counsel in New York, active in the parleys of the reformed Democracy, and a devoted Tilden man. Tilden's election, as I have stated, was conceded in The Tribune of November 8th, but on the following day the principal news columns and the leading editorial bore the same exciting headline—"Hayes Possibly Elected." Whitney, who had long been in friendly alliance with Reid, consulting him on matters of local politics, wrote at once in this earnest vein:

New York,
November 9th, 1876.

Dear Reid:

I want to tell you that our people are absolutely sure. I have been around a good deal today, and the sentiment of Republicans is that he must not be counted out. Don't fail to get right on this subject. Pardon the suggestion, but in the present state of public sentiment it is the card, and worth a presidential election to you. You must furnish a contrast to your neighbor. This is by way of suggestion. I make it because my only regret in connection with it is that you have been on the other side. This is your chance in my judgment.

Yours, W. C. Whitney.

Your articles since election have been commented on as manly and fair.

His response to this plea consisted in brushing aside all questions of "sentiment," and looking solely to a solution of the difficulty that would be indeed fair, based upon hard facts and justice. All through the incertitude and strain of the months preceding the inauguration Reid's correspondence and his editorials have but one burden—"Let partisanship cease for a moment, and all honest citizens unite in the demand for an honest count and honest declaration of the vote." It was the manifest disinterestedness of his arguments that gave them their weight and that in the upshot, I may add, increased their value for Hayes and the party. In the midst of countless heated improvisations of elective procedure he was steadfastly for legal and constitutional processes. While the advocates of immediate action were uproarious he urged Congress to make haste slowly, and above all he kept his temper. Nothing, I think, could better show how suavely he preserved his balance at this time than his readiness, on one occasion, to go out of his way in praise of Conkling—of all men!—when for once that venomous opponent gave him the chance by displaying true senatorial dignity. And, by the same token, his impartiality gave to one of his dearest comrades a very ugly quarter of an hour. Watterson's unlucky proposal for the march of a hundred thousand petitioners upon Washington was nowhere more flatly condemned or more cruelly ridiculed than in The Tribune. The truth is that, as I have more than once had occasion to remark, Reid was never averse to conflict, and the open-mindedness on which I have been laying stress did not in the slightest degree incline him to let Democratic claims—or campaign expedients—go unchallenged.

From the start he was insistent upon the fullest investigation of the elections—on which so much was to turn—in Oregon, South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana, and especially in the last-mentioned State he made arrangements to have local conditions frankly exposed by a member of his own staff. During the progress of events, and particularly while the development of the Electoral Commission was toward, he was in frequent consultation with Evarts. They were united in emphasizing the necessity of action that would be unimpeachably constitutional, and Reid tried early in the affair to pave the way for the lawyer's collaboration in whatever was to ensue at Washington. To Garfield, soon after placed upon the Electoral Commission, he wrote as follows:

New York,
January 9th, 1876.

My dear Garfield:

Mr. Evarts came in this afternoon and had a long talk with me, which has produced such an impression upon me as to lead to this note. He very earnestly and emphatically approves the view which The Tribune has expressed from the start, that the whole business of counting the Presidential vote is in the hands of the President of the Senate. He has made an exhaustive study of the proceedings in the Constitutional Convention bearing upon this point and with some curious results. He spoke with kindness of Mr. David Dudley Field, but says that his recently published book is so weak as to be childish. He is in a good deal of uneasiness lest Mr. Ferry, or whoever occupies his seat during the critical moment, may not be careful to use all the powers which the Constitution gives him.

Mr. Evarts' position is such that he is not likely to volunteer opinions. If I knew Mr. Ferry well, I should write to him suggesting a correspondence with Mr. Evarts, or an interview, for the purpose of getting his opinions. Perhaps this note to you may accomplish the same purpose.

My own conviction on the subject is very strong. I utterly despise the sentimental talk of the people who have done no thinking on the subject, and who have an idea that it would be better to throw away the greatest prize ever contended for in such an arena, and allow Mr. Tilden to become President, rather than have anybody dispute the title of Gov. Hayes. I fancy that you feel the same way, and so I write to you frankly and confidentially to suggest that it would be wise for Mr. Ferry and others of our real friends at Washington to get the benefit of Mr. Evarts' opinions. I write absolutely without his knowledge or approval, and should not do it excepting to an old friend.

Very truly yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

P. S. I have sent a line to Blaine on the same subject. Pray talk with him if you think it desirable.

W. R.

To the constitutional point raised in this letter, I may say in passing, Reid adhered in public as well as in private. He denounced from its inception the compromise bill which ultimately defined the character and functions of the Electoral Commission, and even on its passage through both Houses he condemned it as establishing a dangerous precedent. On the other hand, there was nothing to do but to make the best of it, and to be at least grateful for the promise that it gave of an expeditious settlement. As that drew near, as first Florida, then Louisiana, and presently Oregon and South Carolina were fixed beyond recall, by the Electoral Commission, in the Republican column, Reid was quite humanly ready to drop his tussle over a matter of constitutional interpretation. So was Evarts, who as Republican counsel before the august company in Washington saw on the last day of February that the law had been vindicated. To his friend in New York he sent this terse but eloquent despatch:

Washington,
February 28th, 1877.

WHITELAW REID, ESQ.:

Nothing can postpone the regular declaration of Hayes beyond tomorrow. I think Appropriation bills will also pass.

WM. M. EVARTS.

It was a private communication, but Reid printed it the next morning, thus explaining his action to the sender:

New York,
March 1st, 1877.

MY DEAR MR. EVARTS:

I was a thousand times obliged for your despatch and sincerely hope that the use I made of it will not seem to you wholly unwarranted. The feeling of suspense here, especially among the capitalists and business men, was so great, that I knew how grateful they would be to you for a positive statement. I am hoping now that the disorders in the House this morning may not prevent the fulfilment of your expectations.

We are going to say something in the morning as to the proper head for Gov. Hayes' Cabinet.

I may possibly come down to Washington Saturday night if it should seem necessary to reinforce our views by my personal representation, though I have on the whole thought this needless if not undesirable.

Mr. Conkling's friends here have been saying quite openly within a day or two, that he would yet be elected President of the Senate by a coalition with the Democrats, the completion of the count would then be prevented and he would then succeed Grant. I should attach no importance to this story were it not that some of his spokesmen are so positive about it. I think our friends ought to be very watchful on this point—especially if there should arise between now and Saturday any wrangling which should seem to make the election of a new President of the Senate necessary.

Very truly yours,
WHITELAW REID.

The "something" which The Tribune was going to say in the morning, and did say, as the election of Hayes was officially announced, was a most eulogistic nomination of Evarts as secretary of state. It brings up again a matter to which I have briefly alluded, Reid's work as a party counsellor and the increased significance given to it by his conduct of The Tribune in this campaign. The Republican leaders were quick to admit his right to be heard on party management. Throughout the campaign and the subsequent developments they sought his advice and support. How far the influence of the paper carried is illustrated by an appeal of Blaine's, when the Republicans were in danger of losing a senator in Illinois. "There are a few Independents in the Legislature," he wrote, "who hold the balance of power and there is no journal that influences them so powerfully or so constantly as The Tribune." He pleaded for a kindly word in favor of Logan as for a help that would be invaluable, saying that it would largely influence, if it did not, indeed, absolutely control, the Independents aforesaid. The exertion of Reid's influence one way or the other was regarded with the more solicitude because every one knew that it was determined by a dispassionate study of the situation of the moment. The point comes out in the correspondence that he had with his friend W. H. Smith, of Chicago, on this matter of the Illinois senatorship. Smith was the general agent of the Western Associated Press, the "William Henry" of one of Reid's oldest and most affectionate alliances. He was also an intimate of the new president. It was to him that Hayes wrote his noted letter from the field during the war, refusing to go home to canvass his district for Congress, and saying that the man who would leave his command under such circumstances deserved to be scalped. He and Reid dealt very frankly with one another over the incoming administration, which they both foresaw was bound to be confronted by enormous difficulties.

Writing to him about Hayes, Reid said: "He is going to have the most trying task any man excepting Lincoln has had in this generation, and nothing but the utmost wisdom can prevent him from shattering the Republican party in the first year of his Administration, and from having that Administration overwhelmingly condemned at the polls in the second." He hoped that Smith and other close advisers had talked freely with Hayes. "I have not," he said, "mainly because my motives might be misunderstood. I want nothing whatever of the Administration." It was natural for him to move with some hesitation at this juncture of affairs. From the moment that the election of Hayes had seemed assured the word appears to have gone forth in some mysterious way that Reid's services in the campaign had established him as the best "friend at court" an office-seeker could have. This was nonsense, which he lost no opportunity to repudiate; but the legend persisted, and he had to parry one request after another for intervention in the matter of some diplomatic, consular, or other govern-mental post. "I promised Gov. Hayes at the beginning," he replied to one of these applicants, "that I would not interfere with his efforts at Civil Service Reform by recommending anybody to him for office." As the pressure continued it embarrassed him enough to keep him silent for a time. At last, however, when every chance of misunderstanding had been removed, he wrote to Hayes, offering him the counsel which many of the Republican leaders felt he needed:

New York,
February 21st, 1877.

DEAR GOVERNOR:

An old Republican friend, whom I think you also trust, writes me from Washington, asking me to attack editorially a scheme for bringing pressure upon you to retain Don Cameron in the Cabinet. To this, and to other letters asking me to favor this or that person, I have replied that it does not seem proper that you should be embarrassed now by such discussions in The Tribune. For that matter, I am not likely, either in print or privately, to trouble you with recommendations for office. For eight years I have rigidly refrained from asking anybody's appointment to any place, National, State or Municipal. At the same time I have always held myself bound to place any personal or other information I had at the disposal of the appointing power, whenever it was sought, and am glad to know that in State and City this has often resulted in appointments which have helped the public service. I do not want to bother you now, or at any time, with such matters, and only wish to say that I have had exceptional means for knowing Eastern politics and politicians pretty thoroughly, and that, whenever you want it, any information I have is absolutely at your command. It is most likely to be of use—if at all—in the way of showing who ought not to be appointed. I have the least hesitation in saying this, since I have no personal ends to serve, and want nothing for myself.

Will it seem intrusive if to this I add a few words as to what the people of my way of thinking in politics expect of the incoming Administration?

Above all things we hope that it will be broad and National, rather than narrowly partisan. We hope for that genuine Civil Service reform, which consists in not turning people out of office merely to make places for other people—in making no change save for cause. We hope for a policy that may retrieve the errors and disgrace of Republican dealing with the South—precisely in accordance with the admirable tone of your letter of acceptance. We very much hope that you may find it possible, as an earnest of this spirit, to make a place for at least one good representative of the South in your Cabinet, and we think especially well of Lamar and Randall Gibson. We should not groan if such an appointment were to be followed by the downfall of such Southern State Governments as can only stand while propped up by bayonets—provided their downfall does not involve a practical re-enslavement of the blacks. We hope to see your Administration thoroughly Republican, because we believe in Republican principles and hold it safer that power should rest in the hands of men backed by the honesty and intelligence of the country, which are unquestionably lodged in the Republican masses. But we hope to see your Administration totally dissociated from the mistaken policy and ruinous leaders that have brought this party and its principles to the verge of defeat, and have seriously dimmed the lustre of the party record.

As to persons, but a word:—Bristow seemed for a little while a good presidential candidate, but would be for many reasons a bad presidential appointment. If Pennsylvania has claims, Galusha A. Grow is better than Cameron, and Cameron's son-in-law is better than his son. We think very highly of Stanley Matthews, and if he can be spared from the contest with Banning, should welcome him to the Attorney-Generalship, or any place in which he might be useful. The Greeley Republicans should be recognized, but not at too great a cost. And finally we hope that you will make up your Cabinet yourself, using or rejecting at pleasure hints like those which may come to you from any quarter in which you may trust, but not going to Washington much in advance of the inauguration, to have party chiefs pulling and hauling over Cabinet places.

I have written, you see, with absolute frankness and freedom. Pray use or drop in the waste basket as may best accord with your own judgment. In any case I earnestly hope for and expect the success of your Administration.

Very truly yours,
WHITELAW REID.

Gov. R. B. Hayes,
Columbus, O.

The disinterestedness of this letter requires no emphasis, but it received such pointed confirmation in a subsequent episode that I may here fittingly anticipate a later date in my narrative and exhibit Reid's whole attitude toward the question of public office as it was then forced upon him. He pretended to no influence with Hayes. The President nevertheless welcomed his counsel and valued his support, which was by and by to prove of exceptional service; and as I have said there was an impression abroad, before and after the inauguration, that the editor of The Tribune, who, as we have seen, did not want anything of the administration, could, in the parlance of the office-seeker, "have anything he wanted." Perhaps the best evidence of the vitality of this current idea is supplied in the following letter from Hay:

Cleveland, Ohio.
March 4th, 1877.

My dear Reid:

I have been thinking of something for several days which I will write to you and get off my mind. It has been suggested that you might take a foreign appointment under the incoming administration. I would urge you in the strongest possible terms to do so. There is no reason why you should not, so far as I can see. You have done enough to claim it. You would fill such a place as well as anybody who could get it. It would be a decent thing for Hayes to offer and for you to accept—all right all round.

The reasons why you should do it are too numerous to mention. Your health absolutely requires it. If you intend to live to be an old man, it is the best thing to that end. Then, the experience of a certain world you would get, is invaluable to one whose life is sure to be passed in public as yours is. You will lose nothing by the temporary absence. No man of any force ever does. He gains rather by the subsidence of vivid envies and hates.

Then there are two chances to one that you would come back home married. You have no time for such things here. Abroad you would have lots of leisure and lots of lovely Americaines on your hands. In amusing them you would be very apt to get amused yourself.

It is a thing a man ought to do, once at least in his life, if it is possible. It is infinitely better that he should do it while he is young and handsome. You have not many years to fool away. If you do it now, you will never regret it. I will go bail for that.

If you get a nomination and have any doubts about the Senate, let me know and I will do all I can. But I don't imagine you would have any trouble.

Yours,
John Hay.

It was a sound philosophy. Coming from Hay, who had tested it in his own experience, and who added to his worldly wisdom the affectionate interest of Reid's closest friend, it would have moved him in this matter if anything could have done so. He put the idea from him, however, and thought he had heard the last of it. Least of all was he inclined to think of a foreign mission for himself when his colleague, Bayard Taylor, was made minister to Germany in the spring of 1878. Rejoicing in that appointment, taking a leading part in the demonstrations of good-will with which the poet was speeded on his way to Berlin, he could not but reflect with satisfaction that the very fact of Taylor's being a Tribune man tended to put a quietus upon any further gossip about his own intentions. The general assumption would naturally be that no more diplomatic timber would be sought in his neighborhood, an assumption exactly to his mind. It was a good summer to go abroad. The Universal Exposition was just opening in Paris. Edmond About, writing in the name of the Société des Gens de Lettres, invited him to come as a delegate to the international congress then launched under the presidency of Victor Hugo. Undoubtedly, as Hay suggested, he could have found amusement in Europe, the blithest solace for "vivid envies and hates." But affairs at home were a little more than amusing and he preferred to stay there. Then, in December, Taylor died at his post. Reid had hardly read the bitter news when fast on the heels of it came this surprising proposal:

Department of State,
Washington,
December 23rd, 1878.

My dear Mr. Reid:

The President has desired, as far as it was in his power, in making his choice of Ministers to represent us abroad, to attach more importance to the public position and public service of eminent members of the Republican party than to their mere relation to any political or personal interests, within the party, how prominent soever these latter might be.

In accordance with this desire, I am directed by the President to ask your acceptance of the German Mission made vacant by the death of Mr. Bayard Taylor.

It gives me, personally, great pleasure to convey to you this wish of the President, and to express the hope that you may find it to accord with your inclination, and to be not inconsistent with other obligations, to undertake the public service which the President asks from you.

I am, my dear Mr. Reid,

Yours very truly,

Wm. M. Evarts.

The issue in concrete form was, indeed, a little more difficult to deal with than it had been when hypothetically presented by Hay. He was not indifferent to the attractiveness of this offer. But his mind had already been made up, and after the usual decent interval he made this refusal:

New York,
December 30th, 1878.

My dear Mr. Evarts:

I must tender to you, and beg you also to express to the President, my best thanks for the unexpected mission to the German Empire. Two considerations render this high honor peculiarly grateful. You call me to a post last held by a near friend, and you do it solely on the flattering estimate placed by yourself and the President upon my public service.

I have always thought the citizen ought to attempt any task to which his Government may summon him. But the work in which I am now engaged, which is also a public duty, seems to give greater opportunities—for me at least—for serving the country and advancing those views of public policy which we agree in thinking essential to its prosperity, than any that could be afforded in the new field you propose.

Nothing, therefore, but a sense of this duty induces me to ask that you allow me to decline the brilliant position you offer.

I am, my dear Mr. Evarts,

Always faithfully yours,

Whitelaw Reid.

This correspondence was not published until the following spring, after Andrew D. White had been appointed to Berlin, but the press got wind of the subject, and Hay, before he learned of the reply to Evarts, hastened to return to the charge. Again there were a thousand reasons why Reid should take the Administration's offer. It was to be a dull year in politics. The people in the office could easily carry on the paper. Indeed, for the paper itself, as well as for Reid, there were advantages to be pointed out, if only Hay could talk for half an hour with his obstinate friend. "It would be a great thing for The Tribune," he declared. "It would give it a new prestige and authority. If it is offered you —don't decline without letting me *k*now. I am sure I could show you why you should not lose such a chance." Reid showed him, instead, why he didn't want "such a chance," and explaining at some length how he had himself put it out of his power to act on Hay's advice, some weeks before receiving it, he went on to this conclusion: "I see the force of every point you urged, and I have never undergone such a pang as it cost me to say No. But I still think it was, for me, the wisest thing to do. I tried to persuade Mr. Evarts that he would get a Minister of ideal fitness, if he should offer it to you. You can't guess his answer. You had not been active enough in political effort, and it would not be recognized by the country as a political appointment! Of course I combated this, but I soon saw the matter was hopeless. Well, the men he has since been talking of have been politicians enough to satisfy anybody; but somehow he doesn't seem to succeed in satisfying himself." There was nothing more for Hay to say. Nevertheless, he was too ardent in the transaction to let it go without once more opening his heart about it, and the letter in which he did this offers perhaps the best of commentaries on the entire subject:

Cleveland, Ohio,
March 30th, 1878.

My dear Reid:

I arrived at home yesterday afternoon and found your letter of the 20th here. I need not tell you with what sympathetic interest I read it. You have passed through one of the most important events of your life in a manner that does you high honor—and I do not imagine you will ever regret it. You have had the cake though you did not eat it, and there is probably as much gratification in the self-denial as there would have been in the indulgence. You have gained the position you occupy by unceasing hard work, will and sagacity—that is to say, by merit, and standing gained that way is never lost. I give you my hearty and affectionate congratulations.

Of course you will not expect me to take back what I said in my letter—but I will not repeat it. I want you to have some of the good things of life, as well as the great ones—before the evil days when we shall say "I have no pleasure in them." But perhaps you enjoy your work—the splendid attitude of The Tribune—the power and influence, more than you would anything different.

I thank you for what you said of me: but don't grin at this—Mr. Evarts was right about it. I have not the political standing necessary for the place—neither had Taylor. His appointment was in no sense a good one, and it was fatal to him. I tried to say a word to Taylor about it when he was here, but he was deaf to any such considerations. Now you may believe it or not—but I would not accept the mission to Berlin, if it were offered to me. I know I am not up to it in many respects. At the same time, I am free to say I would like a second-class mission uncommonly well. . . . Good bye, and all good wishes. If you get only what you have honestly earned you will do well enough.

Yours faithfully,
John Hay.

CHAPTER XXII

RUTHERFORD B. HAYES

In the letter concluding the preceding chapter, John Hay touches upon a point which presents itself again very naturally at the beginning of this one. Reluctantly acquiescing in Reid's declination of the Berlin mission, he says: "But perhaps you enjoy your work—the splendid attitude of The Tribune—the power and influence, more than you would anything different." These words express an idea that was held by all his friends. They united in congratulating him on his decision, and invariably their inference as to his motive took account of the zest for leadership assumed to be implanted in the journalistic breast. Power and influence—these have undoubtedly been the mainspring of editorial ambition in the view of most commentators on the subject, and practically every scrap of available evidence confirms the universal opinion. Delane was hardly more than a youth when he burst in upon his friend Blackwood with his momentous news: "By Jove, John, what do you think has happened? I am editor of the 'Times'!" But he had, even then, the instincts which were to make him the monitor, and sometimes the terror, of cabinets and kings. Reid had those same instincts, and he hadn't the smallest objection to their being attributed to him by his friends. He never underestimated an editor's chances to exert pressure upon public affairs, nor did he forego any of the exhilaration to be got out of the use of them. On the other hand, behind ambition lies character, behind the exercise of power and influence lies a ruling passion, and this, in the case of Whitelaw Reid, meant more than a relish for authority.

He had, like Delane, a genius for politics, and I mean by that a disinterested love of the subject, a love of the play of political ideas, a love of the political conflict for its own sake. Something of this, I hope, has already appeared in my narrative, but it should be even more manifest presently. The turn in the tide of our national life which synchronized with the election of Hayes brought also a turn in Reid's career. He was older—on the verge of forty—and he entered upon a greater freedom. Through the war and during the first phases of reconstruction he labored, as others did, under the confused conditions of a transitional period calling for the swift satisfaction of immediate needs. The campaign of 1876 cleared the air, steadied industrial progress, and opened the way for a settlement of political problems in a longer perspective. And, fortunately for Reid, the ensuing period was one of prosperity for his paper, greatly relieving him from the material anxieties which are a bugbear to the man wanting all his thought for larger issues. At the time of his correspondence with Hay, over the Berlin affair, he wrote: "You'll be glad to know that the office does well. We made $85,000 last year and got everything into beautiful shape. . . . This year we are today $32,500 ahead and have every dollar of it in bank—with supplies purchased and paid for ahead besides." Getting everything into beautiful shape included the adoption of Robert Hoe's latest invention, his new perfecting and folding press, a machine which printed 18,000 Tribunes in an hour and thrust them forth all ready for mailing, thus giving the paper a better capacity for production than was possessed at that moment by any of its rivals anywhere in the world. Osgood, the Boston publisher, wrote to commend The Tribune as a model of good printing and proof-reading. "It is better in those respects," he declared, "than some pretentious books." Save in 1861, when Greeley had brought out a regular Sunday edition, The Tribune had appeared on only six days of the week. In 1879 Reid revived the Sunday issue, specializing in foreign despatches and literary matter, and it proved a solid success. It was in that year that he was asked to speak before the editorial associations of New York and Ohio, and in the circumstances the address he delivered, first at Rochester and then at Cincinnati, was bound to breathe a cheerful, optimistic spirit.

His friends were delighted with this address. "It is the best thing on journalism in the abstract that I know of," Bigelow told him. Hay was as enthusiastic: "It is not only admirably written and thought, but it gives to laymen the best view of real journalism that has ever been put in print, and to newspaper men it is simply invaluable." The press at large was no less cordial. Reid was wearing down a good many of the animosities that had been excited in the Greeley campaign. Enemies he still had, political and journalistic, but he was more strongly intrenched against them, and if his private friends had increased in number, so had his well-wishers in public life. Success had something to do with these developments, an unfailing emollient, but if one thing more than another explains them, it is the growth of Reid's reputation for editorial squareness, for political fair play. The sole illustration I cite here is chosen for no other reason than that it involves Roscoe Conkling, as thoroughgoing and persistent a foe as Reid ever had in the field of politics. Upon an occasion when attempts were made to wreak political malice upon Conkling by dragging into print baseless implications as to his intimate life, Reid made some comment on the crime. For fifty years, he observed, Conkling's private character had stood in the fiercest light without a stain. With stinging epithets he warned the scandal-mongers to desist. Two days later he received the following:

Utica, New York.
WHITELAW REID, ESQ. August 21st, 1879.

My dear Sir:

I beg you to receive my warm acknowledgments of the article in yesterday's Tribune—all the more gratifying because I had no reason to expect you to concern yourself in the least in my behalf in any affair whatever. Your words are grateful also because adapted to invoke just thought of the interests most wounded by the hideous calumnies you protest against. I feel deeply obliged to you.

Cordially,
Your obedient servant,
ROSCOE CONKLING.

Reid's philosophy in the matter of mud-slinging as he suffered from that affliction himself comes out in a characteristic episode of his comradeship with Watterson. One of the latter's subordinates took advantage of his absence to slip into the "Courier-Journal" a squib at Reid's expense. After giving the culprit a dressing-down, Watterson wrote: "I'll abuse you, my dear Reid, as much as I please, and whack-whaddle The Tribune, for truly it was never so exasperating or effective. But they shan't call you names in my presence, for I am now, as always, sincerely your friend, H. W." Reid replied: "You and I are both too old and too leathery skinned (rather than thick skinned) to be much tortured by being stroked the wrong way—save in the rare cases when it seems to have been done with malice aforethought by a friend." As a matter of fact, at about this time, the general disposition in a good many quarters seems to have been to stroke him the right way. There even came to him, out of the blue, an opportunity in which he found unalloyed contentment for years. This was his election at Albany to the Board of Regents of the State

University, an election for life, enabling him to bear a really constructive part in the development of New York's educational system. "The millennium is near," said Hay, "when Legislatures do such things." There were, happily, no emoluments attached to the office, it was exactly to his taste, and he accepted it with gladness. His unanimous nomination in the Republican caucus and the cordial spirit in which this was ratified by the legislature left altogether perfect one of the happiest episodes in his career. I shall have occasion to recur to his work as a regent, work which culminated in his designation as chancellor in 1904, but the subject must here give way to the political motive. It does so in these lines from the secretary of state:

Washington,
January 30th, 1878.

Dear Mr. Reid:

I have always thought that next to being one of the wise men of the East, it was a glory most desirable to be one of the Regents of the University. The list of the former was short, and long since made up, but of the latter there is no end, tho' it lingers on your name as its last.

I write for the purpose of congratulating you, and, besides, to show that there is no danger of a war with Mexico or other grave event in our foreign relations, or I should have neither time nor heart for the minor affairs of life.

We expect to maintain the principles of the Message in the financial legislation of the country. That being done, what is there left but the unending struggle to keep Government public and reputable?

Yours very truly,
Wm. M. Evarts.

The "unending struggle" was, as I have said, not only Reid's task but his delight. My purpose in this chapter is to exhibit the political atmosphere of the later seventies, and through the disclosure of Reid's attitude toward the administration to show something of what was thought of President Hayes by his contemporaries. Reid's ideas on the subject were shared by thousands throughout the country. They are historically representative. In recording them I may again touch upon the precise nature of his political feeling, his point of view and doctrine. His strongest characteristic as a politician was his insistence upon the translation of principles into action, his impatience with cloudy, impracticable theorists. The ideas enunciated in his "Scholar in Politics" were all, as we have earlier seen, the ideas of a determined realist. They rested upon a stanch idealism. To one who asked him for a "sentiment" in 1880 he wrote: "Americans should dignify, not degrade politics. They should realize that to go into politics is to deal with the highest objects of human concern; and that the pretended feeling of contempt for those who do, merely because they do, is the sure mark of a snob." The moral of this saying lies, however, in the thoroughly practical application of it which he always insisted upon. A good pendant to the foregoing declaration of faith is the piece of advice which Walter Phelps gave to a friend who was going to the editor of The Tribune with a business proposal. "Always trust to Reid's Scotch sense," he said.

Like Socrates, in the "Protagoras," he hated to disbelieve the proud assertion that the art of politics is capable of being taught, of being communicated by man to man, yet he, like the philosopher, was tormented by a doubt, and for much the same reason. When the Athenians were about to build a ship they listened to the shipwrights. "But when the question is an affair of state, then everybody is free to have a say—carpenter, tinker, cobbler, sailor, passenger; rich and poor, high and low—anyone who likes gets up, and no one reproaches him, as in the former case, with not having learned, and having no teacher, and yet giving advice; evidently because they are under the impression that this sort of knowledge cannot be taught." Reid noticed the exact reproduction of this absurdity, the plague of the political philosopher in all ages, in his own day and generation. There are parts of an editorial published in The Tribune early in 1878, when Hayes had been nearly a year in office, which might almost have been inspired by the Platonic dialogue as well as by the existing situation. I cite them herewith:

> This is the only part of the world where experience is not supposed to be of any use in managing the affairs of a great Nation. With us the pursuit of political advancement became long ago a demoralizing occupation. So many thousands went into it for the most sordid purposes, and followed it in the most disreputable methods, that "politician" became a term of reproach. A place under government, instead of reflecting lustre on the man who held it, rather exposed him to suspicion. It is true that we can point to a few men, in Congress and elsewhere, who have devoted their lives to public affairs with an uprightness, dignity, and patriotic spirit which the whole country recognizes. But they are brilliant exceptions. Office-getting in the main is only a vulgar trade, and a man is hardly qualified to succeed in it until he has rid himself of high ideas and fine scruples.
>
> But in the reaction against political corruption which has agitated the country during the past six or seven years, we are in danger of committing a mischievous piece of extravagance. We must not forget that governing the United States is an art, and a very difficult art, and it cannot be learned in a week or two by smart lawyers, merchants, ministers, and authors, who have had no experience in the management of men and parties. The reformers of our day are too much inclined to consider it the highest recommendation of a candidate for a political post that he is "no politician"; which is much as if they should undertake to correct the evil tendencies of the stage by insisting that all plays should be performed by men who are "no actors." It is not usual to value a doctor for his ignorance, or to select gentlemen who never practised law for elevation to the bench, however highly they may be distinguished for general intelligence and personal virtue. But the principles of common sense which are so rigorously applied to the liberal professions are too often forgotten when we come to deal with affairs of state. The doctrinaire reformer believes that he can practise one of the most delicate of arts without having learned how, and that the right way

to govern a political party is to put it under the care of persons who have no practical knowledge of the mechanism of politics.

This is pestilent nonsense. The country is governed by parties, and probably always will be, and the management of parties requires a certain tact, adroitness, and worldly wisdom which are only gained by long experience. These qualities are perfectly consistent with high moral principle, and they are essential to the first order of statesmanship. Mr. Lincoln possessed them. Mr. Hayes lacks them. Some of the counsellors with whom Mr. Hayes has surrounded himself lack them still more wofully than he does.

The plea here advanced for a sounder administrative technic constitutes the burthen of Reid's criticism throughout this administration—and with criticism he kept The Tribune plentifully supplied. He gave Hayes loyal support, but, as he frankly said at the beginning, he gave it with "no disposition to gush." He was equally resolved to bestow praise when it was deserved and to apply censure when it was due, and the record of the four years discloses an open-minded independence as marked as that of the paper when it was nominally at odds with its historic party. The tone of The Tribune may perhaps best be indicated by citation of the fact that its weighty service to the Republicans through its exposure of the Cipher Despatches was performed without any abatement, at any time, of its attacks upon Republican shortcomings. Reid's attitude was determined by that "Scotch sense" in which Walter Phelps had such faith. Though he had as much liking as respect for Hayes he estimated his abilities and temperament too coolly to expect miracles at his hands. He looked for prudence rather than brilliance in the new President, and most historians will agree, I fancy, that in this he was right. He had, also, a lively sense of the stubbornness of some of the President's problems, and was especially inclined to give him the utmost possible time in the settlement of the most trying of them all, the pacification of the South. The trouble there was doubtless too deep-seated, too wide-spread, too hopelessly entangled with conditions engendered by the war, to be removed in a twinkling by any executive order; time alone could work the desired appeasement of sullen passions. But much could be accomplished by putting an end to Grant's policy of military intervention, and this Hayes did.

When he withdrew the federal troops from South Carolina, handing over that State to Democratic control, he unquestionably went a long way toward consolidating the solid South as a subversive factor in our politics. Still, Reid was not one of those within his own party who blamed him for choosing what was, indeed, the only rational and decent path out of the imbroglio. How Republican leaders differed on this subject I may show through an interchange of notes between Blaine and Reid. The former wrote as follows:

Augusta, Maine.
April 12th, 1877.

My dear Mr. Reid:

I can't go the new policy. Every instinct of my nature rebels against it, and I feel an intuition amounting to an inspiration that the North in adopting it is but laying up wrath against the day of wrath. In any event its success means the triumph of the Democratic party, against which I wage eternal war! *Carthago delenda est.* One hundred years ago today Henry Clay was born, and now none read him or think of him, and in the next generation as few will know him as now know Fisher Ames—the most eloquent man that ever spake in the H. R., except Winter Davis. When I remember the engrossing enthusiasm with which as a college freshman in 1844 I ran and rushed and roared for Clay and see now that his centennial is unheeded and unknown, I have a fresh appreciation of Solomon's wisdom and of the "vanity of human wishes." "We all do fade as a leaf."

Hastily and truly,
J. G. Blaine.

Reid was no less perturbed than Blaine by the advantages accruing to the Democrats through the new move.

But in his reply he goes straight to the essential point, necessarily sweeping aside all questions of party success or defeat:

New York,
April 13th, 1877.

My dear Mr. Blaine:

I wish you did not feel bound to oppose the Southern policy of the Administration. I have no sort of faith in a local government which can only be propped up by foreign bayonets; and if negro suffrage means that as a permanency then negro suffrage is itself a failure, just as Irish suffrage has proved itself a failure in the City of New York.

Very truly yours, Whitelaw Reid.

Subsequent events did nothing to alter his view of the matter. That the Hayes policy failed to placate its beneficiaries, that it did not divide the solid South, and thereby justify itself in the eyes of the President's Republican critics, gave him no surprise at all, for he had never imagined such results as possible. He knew the South too well, and down to the end he insisted that belief in government aid for internal improvements and the development of material resources, protection of special industries, and even toleration of dubious political methods, as steps toward real reconciliation, was only a pleasant delusion. Nevertheless, he saw that the Republican policy was at bottom conciliatory, humane, and just, the history of parties offering no parallel for "the magnanimity it extended and the generous confidence it reposed in its vanquished enemies," and on that summing up of the moral issues involved, the issues which he felt to be paramount, his defense of Hayes in the South rested.

On the two other salient topics in the history of the administration, the currency and civil service reform, he was less at ease, despite the signal progress made in both directions. The fact was, of course, that Hayes discounted his good faith in these matters by his want of political acumen. They needed political nursing, which was the last by-product of statesmanship of which he had any knowledge, or for which, to be sure, he had any sympathy. He had an exaggerated confidence in the power of the veto, or, if not that, a certain belief in its consolatory function, as the outward and visible sign of a duty done. Reid liked the vetoes, which he once described as going like pistol-shots straight to the mark, solid, compact, and irresistible. He found too frequent recourse to them equally symptomatic of fidelity to principle and inadequacy in dealing with the conditions promoting them. It was the old story of the needed ounce of prevention. If Hayes had been more sagacious in co-ordinating the executive and legislative branches of the government, there would have been fewer occasions for those pistol-shots. It was very early in his administration that the silver heresy raised its horrid head. Within eight months of his inauguration, in fact, the engineers of the Bland bill, which in effect gave the market value of a dollar to a piece of metal worth ninety-three cents, was rushed through the House, and while that body was preponderantly Democratic, the measure owed its passage also to some Republican support. In other words, the President was not so far the leader of his party as to keep it united at his back, a circumstance which Reid found it increasingly difficult to accept without complaint.

Through the Act of January 14th, 1875, resumption was legally bound to be put into effect on January 1st, 1879. Nevertheless, the inflationists in Congress could be relied upon to intrigue for repeal down to the last minute; in the meantime the silverites won enough success still further to encourage loose thinking on financial policy; and as he went on with the fight, never knowing what the next day might bring forth, Reid attributed a good deal of the prevailing uncertainty to the President's political ineptitude. No one could surpass Hayes in his resolution to re-establish specie payment. Almost any seasoned politician could have shown him how to strengthen his campaign for it. Only he wouldn't be shown. Congressmen complained that he was "unapproachable." It was not so much their grievance that he wouldn't follow their advice as it was that they got next to no chance to give him any. From the purest of motives he kept them at a distance. "The President and his Cabinet," said The Tribune, "think it well to sit 'On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind,' convinced that a reforming Administration should not seek to influence legislation, and that it should take pains to divest itself of any relations with a party." John Sherman himself was tinged with the spirit of aloofness that characterized the cabinet, but he was, on the whole, more encouraging to work with than was his chief. It was to Sherman all along that Reid turned when he looked toward Washington in the fight. If we remember all that that fight meant to him, the positively sacred zeal which animated him in the campaign for what was, indeed, the restoration of our good name as a people, we shall find an emotion deeper than the mere words suggest in this note to the secretary of the treasury:

New York,
June 13th, 1877.

My dear Mr. Sherman:

I want in a word to tell you—what you doubtless see from day to day in The Tribune—how greatly I am delighted with your steady steps toward resumption. It seems to me you have the game in your own hands, but I am most anxious that you should be so clearly within sight of success before next winter, that Congress may have no excuse for interference. If you see any way in which we can more effectively help you to this end, pray command me.

Very truly yours,
Whitelaw Reid.

P. S. I am afraid of the silver business, but in view of the greater issues, want to put off quarrelling with your shrewd compromise on it as long as possible.
W. R.

Sherman had nowhere sturdier or more constant backing than that which he received in The Tribune. It was critical backing. Reid saw dangers as well as advantages in the famous issue of gold 4 per cents in 1877, and candidly pointed them out. But he aided in assuring the success of that bond flotation, which steadied the public credit, and throughout the remaining period of spade work for the coming of resumption the editorial page resounded with "pistol-shots" of his own, arguments following up the furthest intricacies of the subject with minute logic and with a high moral passion. I emphasize the latter point as significant of a trait. Reid's pæan on the final step is altogether one of satisfaction in the national fibre that had, when all was said, made it possible. To fix ourselves once and for all upon a gold basis was infinitely more than to decide upon a sound business measure; it was to close in triumph "the grandest page in the history of the United States." It was that kind of a triumph because it redeemed a national pledge, saved the national honor. The laurel was for Sherman rather than for any other individual, but it was to the people that the victory essentially belonged, a people dedicating itself to the right in a matter of principle which sophistry had exhausted itself to obscure.

In a long talk that I once had with the late Henry Adams, whose years of friendship with Reid had never been in the smallest degree ruffled by their political differences, he spoke of The Tribune's influence upon public measures with an appreciation at once cordial and humorously rueful. It was sometimes, to his taste, a tantalizing influence, but there was no denying its potency. "I always told Whitelaw that I grudged him his success against Tilden in 1876," he said, "for I wanted Tilden elected—but the success was a great one. I wish Whitelaw had been on our side." He was emphatic on the political effectiveness of the paper under Reid's management, an effectiveness which he attributed to his friend's ability and "invincible squareness." They were of the same generation. From different angles of political vision they had dealt with the same events. When Adams recalled for me Reid's way of leaving a definite mark upon the controversies of his time he was recalling matters which he had himself observed at first hand, problems on which he had followed The Tribune's course from day to day, as they came up. Resumption was one of them. Beyond peradventure Reid left his mark upon that, and considering the historical importance of the subject, his up-hill fight for a stable currency must be regarded as one of the major achievements of his career.

I have mentioned Reid's insistence upon the value of the popular support upon which Sherman had carried resumption through. It is his disposition to refer to the more democratic aspects of public questions which accounts for the growing restlessness in his comments, both editorial and private, on the Hayes administration. Though he was forever bearing witness to the President's sincerity and never lost an opportunity to commend such wisdom as he displayed, he was sometimes in positive despair over the indifference of the White House to that "art of politics" to which we have already paid some attention. To achieve beneficent measures you had to know your public—and its representatives. To move politicians you had to engage in politics. There is a pathetic exclamation in one of Evarts's letters to him at a time of party friction. "I do not despair," he says, "of seeing a considerable warming up of real Republican spirit in New York State. God help a party whose agitations are all about Customs officers!" To the latter pious sentiment Reid could willingly say "Amen." But in the process of warming up a real Republican spirit in State or nation he believed in something more than the enunciation of axioms, no matter how impeccable their point. He had lashed the Republican party for running a political poorhouse for carpetbaggers, and he was as earnest in wielding the whip when on the exit of the carpetbagger the office-beggar took his place. He could not see, on the other hand, how a blundering application of civil service reform, an application which made much of the slogan without really going to the root of the matter, was going actually to help the country.

What, precisely, was his point of view on this notoriously difficult subject, in the period when it was still new and a source of the widest divergence between men equally solicitous of good government? It is stated concisely enough in the following extract from the editorial page, dating from only a few weeks after the inauguration of Hayes:

> What is civil service reform? Some suppose that it is nothing more than a detection and suppression of corrupt practices. Others think that it is merely the selection of better persons for official trust. Others think of nothing but a reduction of salaries or in the number of officials. On the other hand, there are many foes and some friends of civil service reform who suppose that it involves the creation of an office-holding class, with appointments and promotions governed by some cast-iron rule of competitive examination. In all these notions there is more or less of error. It is desirable to break up corrupt rings, but that is not all. It is desirable to get faithful and honorable men for office, to cut off sinecures, to reduce salaries as far as the efficiency of the service will permit, and to stimulate effort and fidelity by the hope of promotion. But a genuine reform of the civil service means all these things and a great deal more. It means, in a word, that public business should be transacted, like private business, on business principles. Altogether the best epitome of civil service reform was the angry criticism of the politician who said of Postmaster-General Jewell, "Curse the fellow, he wants to run his department exactly as if it were a factory."

In a phrase, common sense was his panacea for civil service reform. It made him exacting, and at the same time it kept him from asking too much. In printing the long series of slashing articles on the subject by Gail

Hamilton which made such a stir at the time, he was at pains to point out that her sarcasms would have been far less effective if it had not been for the twaddle of superserviceable newspapers heralding every step of the administration, and the unwise pomp of speeches and pronunciamentos wherewith one or two members of the cabinet were wont to sound the civil service trumpet before it. "Is it reasonable to suppose," The Tribune asked, "that every appointment by a new Administration shall be that of ideal civil service reformers? 'I am a Spiritualist,' said Oliver Johnson, 'but I am not a damned fool.' We are civil service reformers, but we do not expect impossibilities, and are sadly conscious that the millennium has not arrived." He would not accept civil service reform as a kind of mystical rite, automatically cleansing and fortifying a candidate for office, and neither was he prepared to ignore the superior claims of a rival candidate simply because the latter had not suffered the same laying on of hands.

I interpolate here a letter from Hamilton Fish, Grant's former secretary of state, because it is germane to the subject, and if incidentally it revives the name and fame of a faithful public servant, William Hunter, of Rhode Island, that surely does no harm. He entered the government service on May 22d, 1829, as a lower-grade clerk in the Department of State. Fifty years later he was serving as second assistant secretary, and in recognition of his uninterrupted labors Mr. Fish wrote a tribute which Reid printed as an editorial, offering "a refreshing example of the difference between real and sham civil service reform." The letter follows:

Glenclyffe,
Garrison, N. Y.
May 17th, 1879.

My dear Mr. Reid:

Can you give space in your issue of the 22nd to the accompanying notice of a sort of "Golden Wedding"? Mr. Hunter deserves all that I say of him. He is laborious, intelligent, accomplished, master of several languages, faithful to all the requirements of his position. He is a thorough "Index" of the Department. On one occasion the Netherlands Minister called on me asking what he claimed as a right under an old treaty of 1782. The treaty stood on our books without any indication of abrogation or of its being obsolete. After the interview with the Minister I mentioned its purport to Hunter, who immediately replied, "Why, that treaty was denounced by Mr. Adams, while Secretary of State." I requested him to bring me the correspondence. Within half an hour he returned, bringing two or more volumes of records, saying, "I was mistaken. It was not Mr. Adams who denounced it; it was Mr. Monroe, while he was Secretary." But there it was. The denunciation had occurred about fifteen years before Hunter had entered the Department, but it was familiar to him. This is only a "sample." The clue, thus given, on the instant, led to a very interesting and somewhat protracted correspondence, which resulted in the abandonment of the claim.

Hunter has enjoyed the confidence of such men as Van Buren, Livingston, McLane, Forsyth, Webster, Clayton, Everett, Buchanan, Cass, Marcy, Seward, and I doubt not he has that of Mr. Evarts. It seems to me that fifty years of such service deserves some notice and recognition. Those years have been passed in the closet of the State Department, in quiet and in seclusion. Their labors have not attracted the public eye or public recognition to him who sedulously and ably performed them. Why should not such service be pensioned as well as that of a few years in military employ?

Hunter's advancement from post to post is not exceptional in the Department of State. In fact, such is the rule, and has for years been the practice in that Department. The Register of the Department shows persons still employed whose appointment dates from 1840, 1849, 1852, and that nearly every Clerk has been introduced into the lower grades (and after preliminary trial) and advanced step by step. When I left the Department (and I think that the same still is the case) every Head of a Bureau, and every one of the Higher Clerks (with the exception of the Bureaux of Finance and Translation, which are exceptional in their requirements) had been gradually advanced from the lowest grades. But, somehow or other, the fact of a very perfect system, which has long obtained in that Department, of trial, examination, of promotion only on such trial, has failed to attract the notice of the theoretical advocates of "Civil Service Reform," who have written such beautiful essays and reports, and who produce such stupendously insignificant results.

Do not understand me as undervaluing the importance of a thoroughly practical Civil Service. But let it be practical, not poetical or merely theoretic. The absolute right of appointment to office on a competitive examination may introduce into the public service intelligent but sometimes very impracticable persons, and the same rule, applied to promotions, will often saddle the Government with some very inefficient if not improper officers. Something, which mere "Competitive Examination" does not disclose, is needed, beside intelligence and education, to make a good Clerk. Excuse this digression. Hunter was not appointed on a competitive examination, nor under the poetical theory of Civil Service.

Very truly yours,
HAMILTON FISH.

There are practical as well as "poetical" elements in the civil service record of President Hayes as it has passed into history, a record which I am not in any case concerned to challenge. What Reid thought about it, however, is important here, not only as forming part of the tale of his relation to the administration, but as reflecting a large body of contemporary judgment. He was not disposed to traverse it at all captiously when the time came to look back upon it as a whole, and while it was in the making he was frequently its defender as well as its critic. He applauded the soundness—and the promptitude—of the effort through which Hayes sought to divorce government service from partisan committee work, pitilessly depriving office-holders of the joys of political activity. He could not applaud when he saw the very purpose of the President go awry because of amateurish management, so that, as he said, the new policy now outran the most visionary theorist, and then halted, limped, and broke down utterly in the most capricious and confusing manner. Moreover, he was clearly aware of the fact that Hayes was not, after all, a statuesque embodiment of the starchiest political proprieties, but an ordinary man, like unto others in the every-day world, who occasionally descended from the empyrean and mingled in the dust and noise of terrestrial fights. Did he really hold himself unyieldingly aloof from meddling with caucuses and conventions? Or did he manipulate Ohio to get Mr. Stanley Matthews into the Senate, and Pennsylvania to keep Mr. Kelley in the House of Representatives? Old, more or less "local," and thereby irrelevant, questions they may seem now, but to renew them is to envisage an aspect of the time, and to understand a little better why Hayes didn't get a second term. It was not in The Tribune alone that they were posed. All manner of observers were asking them, and asking them because they bore heavily on the matter of party health.

Grant went to a vicious extreme when he plumped for party discipline, party organization, at any cost. Hayes went to another, which if not at all vicious was equally maladroit, when, as in the once celebrated case of the New York Custom House, he was more stubborn than discreet, ran against the Tenure of Office Act, and got himself more than ever at loggerheads with the Senate. It was this latter type of trouble which Reid especially deplored. He saw how contention between the White House and Congress imperilled the welfare of important measures. He saw also the harmful reaction of such discord upon national politics. Others saw it, as I have said, including many of the most devoted Republicans. Hayes looked on with what can only be described as a kind of confident simplicity. His attitude is thus reported by one of The Tribune's Washington correspondents at the beginning of the administration:

Washington,
June 15th, 1877.

DEAR MR. REID:

I had a long talk with the President last night in the course of which I told him that there was danger that by occasional departures from Civil Service ideas in his appointments he would lose the support of the class of men whose friendship was essential to his success. He replied that he apprehended more danger from the antagonism of the other sort of men—the machine politicians—but that he was not much troubled about the North. If his Southern policy worked right all would be well. His talk confirmed my impression that he thinks the Civil Service Reformers will be his friends anyway, and that he must conciliate the old party leaders by giving them a liberal share of patronage. It is the policy that defeated Chase's ambition. The President seemed surprised that there should be any dissatisfaction with his course, and characterized it as the friction necessary in the starting of a new Administration. He mentioned a number of men who I know have been criticizing him sharply of late, as having recently expressed delight at the way the Administration is running.

Very truly yours,

E. V. Smalley.

The task of diffusing political contentment turned out to be not half so easy as it looked. Some of the severest of his critics were to be found amongst his closest friends and supporters. There was no stancher Hayes man in the country than William Henry Smith, and he was writing to Reid, in great anxiety for the fate of the administration, almost as soon as the new régime was established. Hayes was too much, he thought, in the hands of injudicious advisers. Stanley Matthews was a poor mentor, and there were one or two members of the cabinet who were scarcely any better. "There is a great lack of political sagacity there," said Smith, "and the President in his uncertainty has adopted a mode best described by the word 'drifting'—very sure to result in disaster." Stanley Matthews and his influence made a terribly sore spot for many good Republicans. He was the Ohioan (later an associate justice of the United States Supreme Court) who in 1877 was elected to the Senate, taking the seat vacated by John Sherman on his entry into the cabinet. Hayes had got him into the Senate by persuading Garfield to stand aside from the contest, and by other methods which, as we have seen, The Tribune thought came under the head of "manipulation." Gail Hamilton, in the satirical articles aforementioned, was never wittier or more biting than when she came to Stanley Matthews and all that his identification with the White House implied. Incidentally she paid some of her tartest compliments to Hayes. Their tartness and their truth moved John Hay to glee. "Not Pomeroy, or Butler, or Boss Tweed himself," he declared, "ever attempted to run an administration in the interest of his own crowd as this model reformer has done." But it took the President's Olympian tendency to stir Hay beyond the assuagements of humor. There was an instance when Hayes disagreed with Governor Cullom, of Illinois, over the latter's action on certain silver legislation, and was reported to have expressed himself rather too dogmatically on the subject. "He is not goddlemity and governor of Illinois both," wailed Hay in his disgust.

Reid's own letters contain countless passages on the political setbacks which he foresaw as the result of the President's inexpert leadership. "The Administration is in deep water," he wrote to his friend General Comly, minister at Honolulu, "mainly because of the greenhorns in the Cabinet. The objects of the Administration are all right. I only hope it may have better luck in getting hold of prominent men who know how to accomplish them. It looks now as if the storm would break first on Schurz—who certainly first deserves it." That concluding remark contrasts a little unexpectedly with Reid's old appreciation of Schurz when they had worked together as campaigners. The truth is that while he valued the famous orator on the stump he questioned his abilities as an executive, and came to have many reasons for criticising him in that capacity. They had a delightfully spirited correspondence over one or two cabinet performances for which he was inclined to assign some responsibility to the secretary of the interior. It related to issues too long buried for me to revive them now, but I must detach a single fragment from a letter of Reid's to show how his discontent led him to reason with headquarters: "Only one word more. If you gentlemen in Washington suppose that this administration can afford such slips as the Butler business, the Schneider business and half a dozen others, you are mistaken. To us here it seems now in greater peril than at any moment since Inauguration Day. The danger is not chiefly on account of its Southern policy, its financial policy, or any other honest fulfilment of its pledges. These will bring hosts of enemies, but the real danger is that its own acts may so cripple its defenders that they cannot uphold it against next winter's revolt." Even while refusing, roundly and in detail, to accept Reid's strictures as they applied to himself, Schurz could not but say: "The dangers to the Administration you speak of I see very clearly." If only the President and his counsellors all together could have seen them!

There is something almost comic about the effort Hayes and Evarts made to combine their aims on an appointment to the English mission with a diplomatic excursion into Pennsylvania politics. They thought they could sup with the clan Cameron, the dominant Republican faction in that commonwealth, and dispense with the proverbial long spoon. Naturally, they were scorched for their pains. Wayne MacVeagh was involved in the mess, against his will. He didn't in the least like it, and said so to Reid with his usual pungency, but his scornfulest animadversions were for the "bad politics" of the whole affair. The letter of sympathy he received contains perhaps the gist of philosophic comment on the character of the Hayes administration:

New York,
October 27th, 1877.

DEAR MACVEAGH:

I think you are perfectly right in your criticism and complaint. I have said the same things even more earnestly to the friends of the

Administration, and as occasion offered to its members. The trouble in our politics is that we seem to be perpetually oscillating between fellows who want to do wrong and know how, and the fellows who want to do right and don't know how. Just now the latter chaps have the ascendancy. If the good Lord would only send us men who add to the innocence of the dove a little of the wisdom of the serpent, what a blessed relief it would be.

Very truly yours,

WHITELAW REID.

The weakness of the administration thus good-naturedly, if a trifle sadly, diagnosed, requires little further illustration or analysis. It explains the wide-spread dissatisfaction with Hayes to which I have referred, and the ebbing of Republican confidence. I may turn now to the efforts made by Reid toward the strengthening of party lines. He did what he could to stimulate the leaders to repair the mischief done, and circumstances presently enabled him to make a signal contribution to the stiffening of Republican morale.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CIPHER DESPATCHES

The secretary of state was one of Reid's intimates. With him it was always possible to be outspoken on the political situation. It was not so easy to spur him to action. Evarts took large views, generalized in sanguine fashion, and gave but superficial attention to details. The keeping of political fences in order, a duty familiar to skilled party men the world over, figured in his mind, I think, as vaguely akin to the mending of barriers on his farm—a necessity which in the comfortable nature of things would be looked after by underlings in charge. In the summer of 1877, when the President was about to visit him in Vermont, Evarts asked Reid to join them, and added: "I hope your forecast of the future of the Republican party is as bright as mine. I think it has the lead of politics in its hands once more and I have no fear of its throwing itself out." Let the reader imagine how this must have struck an observer already beginning to wonder how the party was to be saved from collapse! The secretary's optimism would have been decidedly less complacent if he could have shared his correspondent's sense of the mutability of State elections. Reid thus endeavored to give him an admonitory hint: "I wish I could feel quite so hopeful as you do about the immediate future. We need to carry Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York, as it seems to me, in order to prevent a good deal of a storm at Washington in the autumn. If we are to carry New York, I don't just yet see how, and shall be delighted if when I get up to Windsor, you can tell me." Evarts didn't wait until the visit to enlighten him. By return mail he hastened to reply: "While you are here I will give you the process by which New York can be carried, but for general method I may now say that it is to be carried as Vermont always is, by having votes enough." Could colder comfort be offered to a planner for party rejuvenation? Such playful conversation was, of course, amusing. It gave no lift to the practitioner of the art of politics.

Reid's anxiety over the fall elections is easily understandable. Though the first year of the Hayes administration was an "off year," with no congress to be elected and nothing really at stake in the national field, it was never too early to look ahead for the conservation of Republican prestige. Business was settling, the country was slowly resuming its prosperous stride. But labor troubles were brewing and even coming to a boil, the strike menace was increasing, and the organization of working men, not only industrially but politically, was pointing the way for that liberalizing of party thought which has been going on ever since. The time was ripe for a new cultivation of political ideas, a new orientation of political forces—in Reid's opinion, of Republican forces and ideas. He knew well enough, without any aid from Evarts, how a State was to be carried. It was by the simple process of showing the electorate why it should "go Republican." The real difficulty resided in bringing that process to bear upon the voter, in getting the Republican leaders to compose their little private enmities and to work together for the common good. When the academic strain in Evarts's temperament offered him but little hope, he sought in other quarters also the needed practical co-operation. Garfield was an old political hand, steadily rising in influence. He wrote to him:

New York,
March 16th, 1878.

My dear General:

I was sorry to miss you the other day when you were here—especially because I wanted to have a little frank talk about the Republican prospects in this State. You and I agree in believing that the Administration really wishes for the success of the Republican party, because it really believes in Republicanism. Many of our New York politicians, you know, take a different view.

Now the truth is that partly because they take a different view, and partly because the Administration thus far has done little except disorganize, the Republican party in this State is drifting terribly. There is at this moment imminent danger that the new greenback organization may draw to it odds and ends enough to give it control of the next Senatorial election. I can't conceive of any single election result more disastrous to all the good things of Republicanism —honest finance, honest payment of our debts, and, in order that these may be possible, sturdy resistance to the devouring demands of the solid South.

I have no candidate for Senator, and care far less who is to be the man than that he should at all events be a Republican—and be a Republican because he believes that the above is Republicanism. The talk about my being at work for Conkling is sheer bosh. I have not even spoken to Mr. Conkling in seven years, nor exchanged messages with him directly or indirectly. But we dreadfully want somebody here in New York—either in official position or understood in some way to have the backing of the Administration—who has the capacity to organize and pull together our factions. If this be done I really think we can save a number of Congressmen in this State next fall, save the Senator, and have a fighting chance for the electoral vote in 1880.

Last summer at Windsor I tried my best to impress upon Mr. Evarts that some such man as Gov. Fenton ought to be called in to get up our organization again. I don't insist upon him, or upon any one man, and don't urge that any office need necessarily be given to anybody in order to get the work done. But somehow or another the work ought to be done, and done soon, or we shall be worse off in this State next fall than we are now.

It seems to me the great duty of the hour for Republicans is to quit quarrelling, and try to get together. I don't believe either the Administration or the Congressional side entirely free from blame, and I don't believe any good can result from postponing work until factions can fight out the question which side is the more blameworthy.

I wanted to talk this over with you, because I thought you would see with me the vital importance of having something practical done.

Very truly yours,

WHITELAW REID.

There is a touch of humor in what followed. Appeal from the secretary of state to the congressman from Ohio brought the problem neatly back—to the secretary of state. "I have had a long talk with Evarts," Garfield replied, "and showed him your letter." However, the carrying of coals to Newcastle was not altogether without its effect. Under reiteration of the cry of alarm Evarts began to realize that action of some sort was imperative. "He seems to be more alive," said Garfield, "to the necessity of organizing the party in New York than I expected to find him. I have been greatly discouraged by the conduct of the Administration—in reference to the future of our party—and am now only a little less so than I was a fortnight ago. Evarts said he expected to see you soon, and I hope something can be done in the matter of which you write." It was impossible, in the circumstances, to subsist on "hope" alone, and whatever Evarts may have had to say at the meeting foreshadowed in Garfield's letter, it left Reid unappeased as to the shortcomings of the administration. His fears for the future deepened daily. Early in March of this year he had been warning the party that a day of reckoning would come. A few days later The Tribune was telling Hayes, with chapter and verse to prove it, that thus far his administration had been a failure; and in April an editorial on the political disorder of the time opened with the chilly remark that the death of the Republican party was considered fairly certain, not only by many of its foes but by some of its friends. The reorganization of the Republican congressional committee shortly afterward, and talk of tendering the party leadership to Hayes, did nothing to alter Reid's pessimistic frame of mind. He still found the outlook gloomy, still held to the opinion that only an heroic purgation would repair the damage done by administrative folly. "The Republican party would be very much improved by experience of defeat," he said, and he was only rather bitterly amused when as the result of observations in this vein he heard from Washington that divers people in that city had been made "unhappy" by the tone of The Tribune. Merely to make them unhappy was not enough. He wanted action. And just as it seemed next to impossible to get that, the opportunity arrived for him to take, himself, a decisive hand in the favorable transformation of affairs. It came with the reopening of the controversy over the election of Hayes.

The head of King Charles the First was a no more persistent intruder upon the flow of Mr. Dick's narrative than Tilden was upon the tenor of national politics following the verdict of the electoral commission. That verdict gave him, in his own eyes and in those of thousands of ardent supporters, the status of a claimant whose case might at any moment be profitably revived, and as the event proved he was disposed to enforce to the uttermost his fancied lien upon the Democratic party. His tenacity was generally understood. Yet the distance to which it might carry him was a question on which light was a little slow in forthcoming. One of the interesting aspects of the matter is supplied by the atmosphere characterizing certain of his personal relations. These had not been seriously shaken by the acerbities of the campaign. Political antagonism was one thing, private friendship another, and those of Tilden's opponents who knew him well were disinclined to infer, from even the murkiest of election mysteries, anything like the scandal which these really foreshadowed. While everybody expected the Democrats to take time to get over their chagrin, and allowed the fullest possible margin of that consoling element to their leader, nobody, meanwhile, regarded the latter with any very grave suspicions. The attitude reflected in Reid's correspondence is on the whole one of good-humored understanding. Naturally, Tilden was irreconcilable. But he would get over that and acquiesce in an apparently closed decision. Who could blame him for not being in a hurry to do so? Nevertheless, his conduct in the future was bound to be a matter of interested speculation. "How well Hayes is doing," wrote Godkin to Reid, shortly after the inauguration. "What will Tilden now do with the Green Seal Johannisberger?" We have heard of that ambrosial fluid before, and Godkin's slightly *malin* query raises a veritable cloud of surmise.

With whom, indeed, of the old circle, was Tilden to pour his delectable libations? With Evarts, as of yore? With Reid? From the latter's reply it might seem that he, too, doubted a continuance of the good-fellowship of former days. "I cannot answer your conundrum as to what Mr. Tilden will do now with his Green Seal," he says, "but the malicious gossips here have an answer of their own to it. They say he will drink it." He himself had handled the Democratic candidate without gloves. There was small prospect of their ever foregathering again in the ancient spirit, and, in fact, I cannot discover that they ever did. Still, their friendly intercourse was not altogether dropped. When Reid gave a dinner to Bayard Taylor, the night before the new minister to Berlin sailed for his post, he invited Tilden, and the latter postponed an important business trip to the West in order to accept. Evarts, detained in

Washington by the public business, politely regretted that he could not join the distinguished company assembled to do honor to the poet. "Though," he wittily added, "no doubt Gov. Tilden's presence will even any amount of absence." It is permissible, I fancy, to surmise that when the former advocate of the Republican party before the electoral commission indited that Chesterfieldian allusion he emitted a thoughtful chuckle. Evarts had ever a delicate sense of comedy, as he had of the amenities. But six months later the secretary of state writes another note to Reid, which in all that it implies offers a good measure of the distance then separating Republican leaders from the Tilden of the Taylor dinner:

Windsor, Vermont.
October 10th, 1878.

My dear Mr. Reid:

Your telegrams are splendid! Even the Ohio election [which gave nine Congressmen, out of twenty, to the Republican party, and greatly strengthened the cause of hard money in the state] cannot eclipse them. I expect to spend Saturday in New York and shall be at the Brevoort House. I am very desirous of seeing you, as the time is now ripe for the politics of "good government," which is all the people care for and all the circumstances of the country need. If the Republican party is but half wise and half honest it will distance its rival in both competitions, and hold the Government till it becomes weary of well-doing.

Everybody owes The Tribune gratitude and applause in so great measure that we shall have to fund the debt.

Yours very truly,
Wm. M. Evarts.

The "splendid" telegrams were, of course, the famous cipher despatches, translations of which developed that the Democrats had sought the purchase of electoral votes in the campaign of 1876.

"It is a matter," Reid once pithily wrote to me, "in which The Tribune played a great rôle, which neither rival newspapers nor Democratic historians have ever been ready to recognize." That partisan commentators should have taken pains to understate the facts is not surprising. It is not so easy to understand why those facts have not received more appreciative notice in disinterested quarters. I suppose it has been due in part to a conventional view of the central point at issue. The narrowness of the contest between Hayes and Tilden has by itself absorbed attention. The bald fact that the election was disputed has overshadowed collateral events. But the election of 1876 differs from that of 1800, which was thrown into the House, and from that of 1824, which was submitted to a like course, in this—that it had a sequel, bringing out circumstances unprecedented by anything in the seating of either Jefferson or John Quincy Adams. Once they had entered the White House the manner of their translation thither relapsed into the limbo of purely academic discussion; it could have no aftermath. With Hayes the aftermath was everything. Consider what, as a moral certainty, would have happened if the cipher despatches had not been turned inside out in The Tribune. Is it not altogether probable that the shortcomings of the administration would have paved the way for the success of a Democratic ticket, with Tilden at its head? And in such an event does not the ordinary trend of human experience suggest that men's minds would gradually have been adjusted to the idea that he had indeed been honestly entitled to the presidency in 1876? He himself, we know, would have reckoned election in 1880 as a vindication of the Democracy in the previous campaign. But because the cipher despatches were turned inside out in The Tribune, the course of political events was tided over an ugly crisis, and history, instead of being falsified, was everlastingly set straight. Evarts could see that, as we have learned from his estimate of the debt of gratitude owing to The

Tribune. That is all which I am concerned to show to my readers. This is not the place for an outline of the cipher investigations which would follow all their ramifications, through Congress and elsewhere. It is the place for description of a great journalistic feat and some analysis of its consequences.

The story automatically divides itself into two parts. In the first suspicion is roused and confirmed, but by evidence as yet too tangled to be made a weapon of conviction, and the real clew to the drama eludes all search. It embraces the period of the election and drifts inconclusively through the following year. I shall note only those episodes which mark the spinning of subsequently important threads. Charges of fraud in the South were in the air as the counts came in, early in November, but several weeks elapsed before action in the Senate produced the first cipher. There was from the start some difficulty in extorting telegraphic documents from their custodians. The Western Union objected to giving up the originals in its possession, and Democrats in Congress presently showed a disposition to oppose their production from any source. Meanwhile, in the case of Oregon, the committee on privileges and elections felt that it was on the scent of a dark secret, but could not run it to earth. The Republicans of Oregon believed that some $25,000 or $30,000 had been raised in New York to carry out a scheme for stealing the electoral vote in their State, and that Governor Tilden's intimate advisers had procured the funds and started them West. The committee went on, doing the best it could with the testimony of its witnesses to discover the truth, testimony offered in the ordinary way, in normal terms. Then, late in January, 1877, the subject took on the complications proper to a novel of Gaboriau's or a story by Poe, with the appearance, in a batch of Oregon telegrams that had at last been forced into the light, of this scintillant jewel:

Portland,
December 1st, 1876.

SAMUEL J. TILDEN,
15 Gramercy Park, New York:

Heed scantiness cramp emerge peroration hot-house survivor browze of pia mater doltish hot-house exactness of survivor highest cunning doltish afar galvanic survivor by accordingly neglectful merciless of senator incongruent coalesce.

GABBLE.

The reduction of this gibberish to sense involved a very simple process. The despatch was written in a "Dictionary Cipher," in this case the book employed being a little "Household English Dictionary" published in London. As The Tribune came by and by to explain, the first word of the message to be sent was sought in a dictionary previously agreed upon, and the sender substituted for it the word which occupied the corresponding line a certain number of pages forward or back. The second word was treated in the same way, and so on until the whole message had been turned into cipher. The person who received it got at the translation by reversing this process, and in the case of the despatch just cited arrived at this result:

I shall decide every point in the case of post office elector in favor of the highest Democratic elector, and grant the certificate accordingly on morning of 6th instant. Confidential.

GOVERNOR.

The "Gabble" despatch was first translated by Mr. A. W. Shaw, of the Detroit "Post," and published in that paper. Also, it happened that a firm in his city which had had many dealings in mining stock with J. H. N. Patrick, Mr. Tilden's secret agent in Oregon, discovered that the telegrams bearing his signature and brought out by the Senate committee were in the very cipher which it had used with him. This firm revealed, under oath, to the committee, the nature of the cipher, and promptly the true inwardness of a rich handful of cryptic telegrams was disclosed. It told much, but not by any means the whole story. That was to be postponed until The Tribune made its decisive exposures in the early fall of 1878, and what I have now to relate is the manner in which the groundwork for the final *coup* was laid—Tilden himself, by the irony of fate, curiously assisting in the task.

Reid took the revelations of the Oregon despatches when they were first deciphered at their face value, which was damning enough. They pointed irrefutably to attempts at the purchase of an electoral vote, and he was witheringly sarcastic in his editorial page on the denials of those "eminent Democrats" who were suspected of complicity in the plot. On Tilden in particular, however, his comment was necessarily modified by the statesman's public repudiation of all knowledge of the use of money in Oregon. "The late Democratic candidate for the Presidency," he said, "has avowed his innocence; we are all glad to believe him; and if he finds that he has been deceived by an unworthy nephew; if bribery, and cipher despatches, and all sorts of sinful games have been going on in his own house without his knowledge; if his telegraphic correspondence has been intercepted and his dictionary purloined; if he has nourished, so to speak, a viper at his dinner-table, far be it from us to gloat over his family misfortunes and point them out to an unfeeling world." If, in short, Tilden was willing to unload the whole business upon the shoulders of his nephew and political representative, William T. Pelton, leaving the world to assume that that more zealous than scrupulous individual had been playing naughty tricks, without authority, and keeping them to himself, there was no more to be said—just then. But Tilden wasn't willing to have done with the mess, and thereby he made one of his cardinal errors. The humor of this painful comedy lies in his inability to know when he was well off, to stop crying "Fraud!" when that was the one battle-cry certain to lead the Democrats to disaster. He harped on the hollow theme early and late, before the inauguration of Hayes and after. It adorned his address of thanks to the faithful at the Manhattan Club, prior to his departure for Europe in the summer of 1877, and he took it up again on his return. An edifying picture was that which The Tribune drew of him, "with a table of figures and cipher despatches in his hand, and a Little Dictionary in his pocket, perpetually piping 'Fraud! Fraud!'" He piped not wisely but too well. He piped so indefatigably that it looked, at last, as if he were to have his day in court, the worst thing that could befall him. In January, 1878, Montgomery Blair rose in the Maryland House of Delegates with a memorial addressed to Congress, impugning Hayes's title to the presidency and urging pursuit of a new judicial decision. This was followed, in May, by passage through the House of Clarkson N. Potter's resolution calling for investigation of alleged Republican (!) frauds in Florida and Louisiana. By that summer the row was on.

Reid viewed the promotion of it with mingled disgust and satisfaction. In common with all shrewd Republicans he was entirely willing to have the election investigated all over again. He was convinced that his party would emerge unscathed. There were even some pleasurable anticipations in which it was permissible to indulge. The Democrats, he was sure, had made a fatal blunder, cooking up for themselves a petard of almost immeasurable hoisting power. The "justice" they were forever prating about would infallibly react upon themselves, if only it could be made to function. But justice hardly seemed the probable outcome of their too ingenious preparations. The committee as constituted by Speaker Randall was perfectly calculated to botch a job hypocritically conceived. The Tribune's private bard thus sang its malign absurdity:

There was a young statesman named Potter,
Who said, "Let us now make it hotter
For President Hayes, and endeavor to raise
From the White House that impudent squatter."

So he went and consulted with Randall,
Who said, "That's not easy to handle,
For I fear we'll be building a house for Sam. Tilden,
And that game is not worth the candle."

But, says Potter, "The session's most over,
And we've all been so damaged by Grover,*
That the only thing left is to charge Hayes with theft,
Or bring suit in an action for trover."

Then they got all their workers and talkers
Assembled together in caucus,
And gave the Fraud yell, and said "We'll raise—well
Anything—so they shan't baulk us."

Then the caucus rose up and applauded
The vote that had just been recorded,
Till some one said, "Hark! comes from Gramercy Park,
A voice, saying 'I'm the Defrauded.'"

These be not precisely Miltonic numbers, but they cover the case. The Potter committee unquestionably got together in the sweet spirit here denoted, and it performed its duties about as fairly, and as fruitfully, as the poet led his readers to expect. From expressions of disgust over their bad faith, and taunts of their inefficiency, The Tribune presently passed to the congenial task of showing the gentlemen at Washington just how the affair might be made to yield its clinching lesson. The story of the cipher despatches here enters upon its second phase, starting in midsummer, 1878, and appropriately reaching its climax around the November elections.

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*Governor Grover, of Oregon, the "Gabble" of the ciphers.

CHAPTER XXIV

A TRIUMPH OF JOURNALISM

The manner in which the cipher despatches were brought back upon the scene, to plague their originators, bears a close resemblance to some of the fortuitous processes of "detective" fiction. When the Senate committee of 1877 had finished its investigation of the election, the mass of telegrams which it had compelled the Western Union to disgorge was supposed to have gone back intact to the company, for destruction. But for some reason which has never been cleared up, a collection embracing hundreds of pieces was tied up in a wrapper and left lying in the committee room. There it remained neglected, like a camouflaged stick of dynamite, and yet not altogether forgotten. It was kept in mind all along by one Bullock, a committee messenger, and he remembered it especially about the time that he secured an appointment to the consulate at Cologne. In fact, on the eve of his departure for that bourne, he appears to have had serious searchings of heart over his dubious bit of salvage. He handed it over to his friend Congressman Evans, to safeguard, and as he did so he made this oracular saying: "The day may be that they will be needed." The guileless Evans had no idea of what "they" might be, but he was sensitive to the subtly disreputable air of the parcel. Its fastenings had gone a little loose by this time. It looked like a bundle of clothes, rolled up in a newspaper and tied with twine, "evidence," beyond peradventure, which seemed to say, for all its harmless appearance: "Yet have I something in me dangerous." Evans shuddered and passed the burden on to General Thomas J. Brady, second assistant postmaster-general. Now, General Brady had himself dabbled in electioneering waters. He was one of the "visiting statesmen" whose travels into the disputed States in 1876 had made that designation a household term. He had been sent down to Florida by Grant, "to see a fair count." Brooding over his bundle, and sniffing the presence of telegrams, he finally yielded to curiosity and cut the fateful twine.

He did this in 1878, while the Potter committee was looking into the Florida matter. It was the psychological moment for him to develop the emotion to which he afterward testified. "I had discovered," he then said, "that I had a large lot of Florida telegrams. I went through them, and from their character I presumed that there was a good deal in them. It looked as if there was an immense amount of latent rascality there." Soon after this, rumors of his find reached Eugene Hale, congressman from Maine, and he mentioned them to William E. Chandler, at that time secretary of the Republican National Committee, later senator from New Hampshire. Chandler had been conspicuously active in the investigation of Southern fraud, and over his signature had supplied The Tribune with daily telegraphic correspondence on the inquest in Florida. He had all along deplored the return of the telegrams to the Western Union, and the destruction which was understood to have overtaken them. That some of the lot had escaped the flames filled him with the liveliest hopes that "the bonanza," the story that would be most worth the telling, had not been lost. When he heard Hale's news he hastened to Brady's house, and from that moment the fat was in the fire, its transition thence, in the usual comic fashion, being aptly expedited by Democratic blundering. Here enters, in fact, the most maladroit of all gods from the machine, the "Moses" of the ciphers, or, in his own proper person, Mr. Manton Marble.

He had retired from the editorship of the "World" in 1876, and had become one of Tilden's closest political advisers and henchmen. He was a loquacious retainer, and in August, 1878, when the electoral controversy was on again, he printed on the subject the most unfortunate observations he ever penned. In them he appeared as a pious celebrant of "the ark and shechinah of self-government." There was no one like him to "provide arsenals of ammunition and fashion lethal weapons to the hand of every hater of fraud." Only he didn't look ahead far enough to see how such weapons might haply be turned against himself. He was too sure, too terribly sure, of his man and his cause. Both were impregnable, "always standing fast in the final citadel of Power, the keen, bright sunlight of publicity." That was where they presently stood, indeed, but with results of which "Moses" had hardly dreamed. He hadn't the smallest inkling of what Chandler was doing in Washington. That gleeful Vidocq had had a most interesting session with Brady over the telegrams in the latter's possession. What did they decide to do? Nothing very definite. They made a stout parcel of the bulk of the despatches, and this Chandler disposed of in the simplest and quaintest manner. He left it on a desk in the office of General Butler, the member of the Potter committee in whom he had the greatest confidence. Butler was out. No one else was present at the moment. But Chandler said nothing to him about it when next they met, and one of the funniest passages in the subsequent inquiry as to how the ciphers "got out" relates to this amiably mischievous episode. Meanwhile Chandler, leaving the bundle on Butler's desk, to reach the committee as the gods might direct, was supplied with a few documents—as was Brady—which if used at all were likely to be used at the dictation of humorously human judgment. They came into play as though in pat response to Marble's noble sentiment on "the keen, bright sunlight of publicity." Chandler wrote the following letter, dating it from a little town whose name, could he have seen it, must have given "Moses" a premonitory thrill:

Waterloo, N. H.
August 7th, 1878.

My dear Mr. Reid:

I have not seen Mr. M. Marble's last revelations; but I think it would be a good time for you to ask him to explain some of the telegrams which are among those which General Butler laid before the Potter committee at Washington the other day; (with multitudes of others—of C. W. Woolley's, J. F. Coyle's *et id omne genus*).

I send you herewith copies of some, which you may have copied, and return to me those which I send you (17 pieces of paper embracing 29 despatches). If I were you I would not publish them all, as news items, but work them into an editorial or editorials on Marble's letter; calling on him, as he is explaining, to explain these. By alternately giving one not in cipher and then one in cipher much amusement might be created.

One serious matter. Marble may be made, and I think is, responsible for the Cronin-Oregon fraud. He was in constant telegraphic communication with Pelton on the subject and tried to make us miserable on the way home from Florida by showing us his despatches. I interpret the cipher despatch to him from K., Dec. 6th, as announcing the success of the Oregon job.

Yours truly,
Wm. E. Chandler.

Starting with this gift, The Tribune's collection of ciphers was rapidly increased. Chandler sent more, Brady made contributions—mailing them anonymously—and others came from Congressman Frank Hiscock, the leading representative of the Republican case on the Potter committee. With the five or six hundred despatches received from these sources, and the numerous others which publication had made available to all men, Reid was in a position to give "Moses" all the publicity he wanted—if the messages could be deciphered.

Publicly he asked Marble to explain, as Chandler had suggested, and when the prodding of "Moses" failed to bring any response he twitted the Potter committee to take steps that might yield results. That illustrious body had made no progress whatever toward the ostensible object of its inquiry. It could do so, in all probability, if it called Pelton and Marble. What in the world did the ex-editor mean when he telegraphed to the claimant's nephew: "Calibre fetid geodesy linguist kettledrum neat cattle?" Mankind wanted to know. It wanted to know who "Moses" was, and who "Brazil," and why "Russia" should be advised by wire to "saddle Blackstone." It was plain that if the investigation failed to get at the key to these cipher despatches it would be a ridiculous farce. Reid tried to extract the secret from Tilden himself. They met at Saratoga that summer, in August, just as the pursuit was growing hotter, and long afterward Reid thus related what happened: "I told him that we had all the cipher despatches that went between his house and Florida, and asked him, laughingly, for the key. I told him we couldn't make head or tail to them, and wanted him to help us. He smiled and blushed, innocent as a baby, and passed on." The next day, however, they had a more serious conversation, one which Tilden sought. "He said to me," Reid subsequently explained, "that he did not receive any of the ciphers, did not believe they had been delivered at his house, and that up to that time [the time of the Saratoga encounter] he had never seen any of them." At the inquiry which brought out this testimony Reid spoke of Tilden's having used a jocular tone, and he was asked if his own request had not been jocularly made. "It was good-humored," he replied. "At the same time I meant it; and should have been very glad to get the key." It was at this period that he received from Edmond About the invitation to Paris which I have mentioned. Topics *de la traduction* were amongst those set down for discussion at the international literary congress in the French capital. The occasion promised to be delightful. But nothing belonging to it could have equalled in fascination the topics *de la traduction* which Reid had at home. When he said "I meant it," he signified that all his determination was engaged upon the search for the missing key.

In this search he was disappointed by the numerous readers of The Tribune, who were prompted by the tentative cipher editorials, as it was hoped they would be, to proffer suggestions. They sent in nothing that was helpful. Schuyler Colfax, deeply interested in the subject, gave a clew to some magazine articles twenty or thirty years old, in the light of which 99–100ths of the ciphers could be unlocked. They failed to provide any assistance whatever. Evarts alone, amongst the friends of the paper, had a promising idea. He thought a student of pure mathematics might unearth the law on which the ciphers were constructed. Such a specialist happened at the moment to present himself with offers of help, Professor E. S. Holden, astronomer and mathematical computer of the Naval Observatory at Washington. He had some success with the few despatches intrusted to him, but his work was useful chiefly in a corroborative way. It was written in the book of fate that this exposure should be a Tribune achievement, and it was brought to a successful completion by two Tribune men, members of the editorial staff, John R. G. Hassard and William M. Grosvenor.

When Reid realized that no outside aid was forthcoming he set Hassard seriously to work upon the despatches, and it was Hassard who prepared the first broadside in the campaign. This was the one, fired on September 4th, 1878, which in exhaustive detail disposed of the Oregon case. The Potter committee having failed to get anywhere, The Tribune contemptuously flung it aside. "Rather than that the inquiry should be altogether fruitless," it remarked, with fine sarcasm, "we have volunteered to show that frauds were attempted in order to secure various States for Mr. Tilden, and that in the State of Oregon especially, which was not at all doubtful but confessedly Republican, a sum of money was appropriated to 'purchase' an electoral vote that would have made Mr. Tilden President." Hassard's three and a half columns of ciphers and translations, facing this pronouncement from the opposite page, supplied the deadly proof. But, as the reader will remember, the Oregon despatches that needed translation were mostly in the cipher for which the "Little Dictionary" provided the key, and the importance of this exposure resided in its special fulness; it gathered up loose ends, corrected errors, and cleared up many cipher messages which had never before been explained. Some use of a dictionary cipher was made in the South Carolina and Florida despatches, but in those States a double, transpositional cipher was employed, with changing details and modes of application. This it was that proved the real nut to crack and that brought Hassard and Grosvenor into friendly rivalry. They kept pace with one another so well that repeatedly they made a discovery at the same moment. In after years some commentators were disposed to argue as to which of the two men was entitled to the greater honor. Reid, knowing more about it than any one else, would never make invidious distinctions in the matter. In the pamphlet he made of the despatches he stated that the credit of translation belonged absolutely to Hassard and Grosvenor, adding that they received no assistance from any outside quarter, excepting from Professor Holden, and that they received from him no translation whatever, and no important clew, until after they had discovered it themselves. To this statement I may append the reply he made to an inquiry of my own on this subject: "You are right in thinking that Hassard deserved more credit than he has received. For that matter Grosvenor did also. They both did extremely well, worked independently, compared notes loyally and altogether co-operated in a charming way in a highly important piece of work. Hassard was a little earlier in the field, and to that extent deserves special credit; but Grosvenor was equally keen, and as well as I can now remember it, about equally successful. Sometimes he and Hassard would attack the same despatch on different lines, and after being foiled again and again, would finally reach the solution the same evening, Hassard in Eighteenth Street and Grosvenor out at Englewood."

The labyrinth of codes and keys into which the two "locksmiths," as Holden called them, forced their way, was thornier than an African jungle. It required half a dozen of The Tribune's broad columns merely to expose the foundation of the ciphers, the relation to it of "nulls" or "dumb words"—that is, words thrown in only to confuse—and all the other sinuosities of a scaly scheme. There was a special vocabulary for the identification of persons. Tilden figured as "Russia," his nephew, Pelton, as "Denmark." Place names were also drawn upon for things as well as persons. "Copenhagen," for example, was often cropping out, and quite naturally, since it stood for dollars. Manton Marble's labels, with sublime appropriateness, were of Scriptural origin. He was known sometimes as "Israel," but perhaps as a sign of the confident belief of his colleagues that he would lead them into the promised land, flowing with Democratic votes, he was reckoned with more often as "Moses." Nor was this the only touch unconsciously vouchsafed to amuse the laborious decipherers, even while they acquired racking headaches over their job. "On the whole, the business is immensely interesting," said Grosvenor in one of his reports to Reid. "Especially as despatches of stupendous virtue are sandwiched in, telling how there were awful Republican frauds, and no frauds whatever by Democrats." I may mention in passing that the countercharges of the Democrats never embarrassed their opponents, who had, in fact, nothing to fear from investigation. The locksmiths could afford to laugh, as they did, without stint, while smiting the enemy. Their editorials, particularly, were as entertaining as they were destructive. Even the exposures proper, the long articles arraying the ciphers one by one, and telling the full tale, were tinctured with a savage humor. That it is which I most regret to forego in here reducing the famous indictments to the briefest possible terms.

The emprise in Florida began with several fervent appeals from the Democratic managers in that State, addressed to those gentlemen in New York whom The Tribune was wont to designate "the ciphering co-parceners." What was wanted was money, and with it "a good man with an understood cipher." The good man forthwith projected into the State was the "Max" of the vocabulary aforementioned, John F. Coyle, a notorious Washington lobbyist. His first care was to arrange for the telegraphic transfer of funds. Then he hied him to Tallahassee, where he joined Marble and C. W. Woolley ("Fox"), who thereafter used the cipher he had brought with him in daily communication with 15 Gramercy Park, Tilden's residence. At first the labors of this trio were directed solely to the perfecting of the Democratic returns and proofs of the correctness of their belief that their candidate had a majority of the votes. But there were hitches in the realization of their hopes, and in the flood of despatches pouring to New York there appeared in due course this sinister message:

Tallahassee, December 2nd, 1878.

COLONEL PELTON,
15 Gramercy Park:

Have just received a proposition to hand over at any hour required Tilden decision of Board and certificate of Governor for 200,000.

MARBLE.

It was asserted by the austere "Moses" that when he sent this despatch he was merely transmitting an offer as a matter of news, an offer which he had indignantly repelled on the spot; but unfortunately the reply to his telegram was of a nature suggesting an entirely different interpretation of the "news" in Gramercy Park, where the last law of interpretation rested. "Warsaw here," the reply ran. "Bolivia Brazil." And this, being deciphered, meant, quite simply: "Despatch here. Proposition too high." Thereupon ensued a situation which a playwright framing a farce could hardly have bettered. "Moses" and "Fox" both took a hand in the dicker, but acted separately, and so got the recipients of their despatches to New York all at sea. The vote was in sight at a much lower figure. It could be had for "half hundred best United States documents," or, to be plain, for fifty thousand dollars in United States notes. But divided counsels had bemused the arbiters of the problem. "Proposition accepted," they wired, "if done only once." "Moses" and "Fox" had sent the same proposition, and, as The Tribune commented in blasting italics: "Gramercy Park did not want to pay twice for the same vote!" Though the misunderstanding was vexatious to everybody concerned, worse remained behind. In the transmission of the despatch authorizing the deal four words had been dropped out, rendering it unintelligible. "Moses" demanded a repetition and the delay was just long enough to dish the whole affair. "Power secured too late," the wily "Fox" reported. "Proposition failed," mournfully telegraphed "Moses"; "tell Tilden to saddle Blackstone," in which cryptic counsel he offered the Democratic candidate the dubious consolation that he might at least have recourse to the law. Thus did Mr. Marble, after a fortnight's heroic effort, himself prick the bladder of his boasting in a despatch to Senator Gordon on November 21st: "We shall put Uncle Sammy through."

The attempts at fraud in South Carolina were regarded at the time of The Tribune's exposures as grosser than those in Florida, because made with more brutal directness. The secret agent active in this case was a stalwart leader in the Tilden Democracy, Smith M. Weed, a politician of altogether expeditious and resolute methods. On the very morning of his arrival at Columbia he made by wire the crisp inquiry: "If a few dollars can be placed in Returning Board [to] insure, what say you?" His negotiations must have been pressed with extraordinary celerity, for a despatch of the same date carries matters well forward, after this fashion: "If Returning Board can be procured absolutely, will you deposit 30,000 dollars? May take less. Must be prompt." "Denmark" was middling prompt, but it couldn't "take less." Indeed, at the end of six days of chaffering the price was fixed at eighty thousand dollars, to be sent in three parcels of five hundred or one thousand dollar notes. These were to be forwarded by a trusty messenger to Baltimore —and a piquant "cipher" document in my possession is a memorandum of the researches made in that city, "once upon a time," by the Sherlock Holmes of The Tribune staff told off to trace the history of the famous parcel. In a work of fiction the chapter on this phase of the drama would be called "The Tell-Tale Dates." On November 18th the eighty-thousand-dollar despatch, signed "W," was sent from Columbia. On November 19th the New York papers contained a despatch from that city, saying: "Smith Weed, who has been here since Tuesday, looking after Tilden's interests, leaves tonight for the North." On November 20th, as The Tribune investigator was so easily to discover, in the true manner of Sherlock Holmes, by simply inspecting the registers, Mr. Smith M. Weed put up at Barnum's Hotel, in Baltimore, and Mr. William T. Pelton, accompanied by a friend, arrived bright and early at the Mount Vernon House. Was this a fantastic coincidence? Or are we to connect these simultaneous visitations with sentences from two of "W's" telegrams, dated November 18th? One of them runs: "You must have the money at Barnum's in Baltimore early Monday morning." The other: "Meet me yourself, if prudent." Neither promptitude nor prudence availed. There was once more "a little delay," and this Returning Board, like the other one in Florida, suddenly upset the plans of mice and men by counting the votes and declaring the result for Hayes. Hope was not utterly abandoned. The "co-parceners" developed a new scheme, one for tampering with the State legislature, but the contemplated purchase of four senators for twenty thousand dollars fell through, as did the collateral plan for jockeying the Hayes electors into committing a contempt of court, so that they could be jailed while the political situation was being subjected to sleight-of-hand treatment. The cream of this latter episode was supplied in a passage in the last of the New York despatches, a touching testimonial to Pelton's possession of a heart. Blandly looking to the personal comfort of the electors, this message ran: "It would be humane to imprison them separately during Wednesday." Yes, it would have been delicately humane to have tucked them away "separately," and besides that it would have been "prudent." For, as The Tribune inhumanely girded, otherwise they might have organized an electoral college in jail!

A shabbier business never got itself organized to the verge of transaction, and from The Tribune's handling of it, which rigidly subordinated conjecture and partisan feeling to the statement of fact, it seemed impossible that the Tilden managers could escape the brand of guilt. A remark of Grosvenor's, made as the first of the Southern exposures was going to press, well indicates the judicial point of view held by the decipherers, and the irresistible nature of the evidence as they saw it. "My part of the story," he writes, "is painfully stripped of the sensational features, but I should hate to be tried for my life with such proofs against me." On the other hand, the business, as I have said, was carried only to the verge of transaction, it was not consummated, and that The Tribune's disclosures would have chiefly a moral effect was foreseen by the man whose observations on the scene in Florida peculiarly qualified him to judge. This was Chandler, who followed carefully the editorials preparing the way for the final exposures, and thus wrote as the latter drew near:

Waterloo, N. H.
September 28th, 1878.

My dear Sir:

I am delighted at the discovery of the translation of the despatches. I felt sure there was talk about money in them which would crush the authors. But I am not sanguine that any overt acts will be proved; all will turn out to be the artifices of thieving shysters anxious to make money out of Tilden or Marble. In other words, there was more talk of money than actual handling of it. But there is no doubt they thought they could buy victory for $80,000 and so telegraphed and sent for the money. They were only fooled; but how can they explain? Your true course is to handle the subject as heretofore; as long as they don't explain we have them; when they attempt to explain, to confess an attempt or willingness to bribe is fatal.

Yours truly,

W. E. C.

Of the paralyzing effect of The Tribune's revelations he had no doubt at all, as repeated expressions in his letters clearly show. "What a squelcher for Marble and Tilden those telegrams are," he exclaims on one occasion, and all his comments are in the same exultant vein. But you may squelch a man without necessarily finishing him off, and Chandler knew this. Full exposition of the Democratic adventures in the South might discomfort and abash those whom he pleasantly denominated "corrupt and cowardly whelps," but it could do no more. He held throughout to the conviction disclosed in the foregoing letter that the "co-parceners" would wriggle out of legal danger. "The situation is quite spicy, owing to the telegrams," he writes between the Florida and South Carolina exposures. "What excuse can Tilden and Marble be preparing? The first will say he didn't know anything; the second must concoct something." That is precisely what happened, and it is unnecessary for me to rehearse in detail the subsequent developments bearing upon the question as to what, if anything, could be done to avenge the attempted perpetration of a great public wrong. The Tribune pressed for further congressional inquiry—translating more ciphers, provocatively, the while—and got it. Once more the Potter committee stepped reluctantly into the breach, and once more the mountain in labor brought forth the mouse expected by cynical observers. Brady and Chandler testified as to what they had done to bring the ciphers into Reid's hands, and he, too, had his day as a witness in Washington, a day of enjoyment unalloyed. The co-parceners were examined by a subcommittee which came on to New York for the purpose. Weed, Pelton, and Marble faced the music in the order named. The net result of their testimony, as exhaustively reported and pitilessly analyzed in The Tribune, was, in the opinion of that journal, essential admission of the accuracy of its work on the cipher despatches, and, in consequence, confirmation of its worst conclusions. Then Tilden went on the stand.

His predecessors of the ciphering coterie, whatever they had to say for themselves, were united as to his innocence, and thus prepared the public for his denial of all knowledge of their secret proceedings in the campaign. How he made it, and what it amounted to, The Tribune thus related in an editorial summing up his testimony:

> In a low, dark room, excessively hot and densely packed, the whole world sat at the reporters' tables, or crowded close with note-book in hand, to catch the faint whispers that fell from a worn and haggard old man. With the look of a corpse except in moments of excitement, with slow, far-away voice, and slow, painful movements, drooping left eye-lid, parchment-like cheeks, and quivering hand, Mr. Tilden repeated his statement, evidently prepared with great care, in a voice much of the time hardly audible four feet away. His manner showed intense and increasing nervous excitement, by great effort restrained; the body rose and fell in the seat incessantly, as if he were trying in vain to rise, and the seemingly half-useless left arm shook like a leaf. Then the excitement burst restraint, the face flushed almost purple, the lip quivered, the right arm repeatedly smote the table with great force and passion, and the voice rang through the room with painful intensity, like the shriek of a drowning man. After every such effort, the sentence died away, as if the voice were stopped by closing waters. The effect was almost that of a death-bed declaration. Had the matter thereof equalled in force the solemnity of manner, this declaration would have had a great effect. . . .
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> Mr. Tilden's declaration of his ignorance of corrupt negotiations seems as broad, full and emphatic as it could be. If there were mental reservations, as it now appears there were in his published card of October last, of such character that an exact statement of truth

> had the public effect of a statement that was false, they do not yet appear. He claims to have had no knowledge that Pelton was communicating in cipher with the Democratic agents at the South; no knowledge that Weed had gone to South Carolina, until he returned; no knowledge that Woolley had gone to Florida, or Patrick to Oregon; no knowledge of any corrupt proposal as to South Carolina, until it was arrested by Mayor Cooper's refusal to provide money for it, and no knowledge even then or afterward of the true nature of the negotiations in that State or the others.

The Democratic press hailed Tilden's testimony as constituting his vindication. The Tribune traversed it, of course, from a very different point of view, asking some cruelly embarrassing questions, and altogether declining to accept the plea of ignorance as final. Reid had not gone through two State canvasses with Tilden for nothing. The reader will recall his saying, in an earlier chapter of this book: "In New York, of all the politicians I have ever seen, he is the supreme organizer." It was incredible that such a man could have remained blind to what his nephew was doing in support of his presidential candidacy, unless he shut his eyes in order not to see! While the Democrats were rejoicing over what they were pleased to consider the rehabilitation of their chief, Reid jeeringly suggested that they uphold the faith that was in them by renominating Tilden for the presidency. To offer such counsel at such a moment was surely to turn the knife in the wound. Also, like much else in The Tribune's management of the cipher business, it was a diabolically exasperating strategical touch. Translating and publishing the despatches was not by any means all of the battle. The generalship which determined when and how this or that body of ciphers should be thrown into the field was an equally important element in the winning of victory.

It was at the time of this affair that Reid had one or two reminders of his old days as a planter. He negotiated for the sale in Mobile of the last relics of that experience of his, "one 80 saw cotton gin," and divers other instruments. Subsequently a correspondent wrote from New Orleans of having met some former friends of his from Concordia Parish. "They all say you were a 'perfect gentleman,' but did not know how to make cotton." He could laugh over their jest, for he could see, at least, how well advised he had been to return from the cotton-gin to the pen. He knew how to make a newspaper. I began my survey of the cipher exposures as a record of newspaper administration, and as such I bring it to a close. "I have not congratulated you on your great *coup*," wrote Hay, shortly after the South Carolina chapter had been published. "It is the biggest piece of intelligent journalism, as distinguished from mere enterprise, that has ever been done in the country. The leader writing about it has been as good as the cipher work,—can't say better, for obvious reasons." How preeminently intelligent was the *coup*, how sagaciously it was controlled from the first playful prelude to the last overwhelming crescendo, in such wise as to produce—in the Democratic camp—the most excruciating possible discord, is made delightfully clear in a note written by "Champollion" Hassard, as Hay brevetted him. He was going off to Litchfield for a few days of rest, just before the Florida despatches were to be published, and he pleaded for a little delay, as follows:

New York,
September 28th, 1878.

DEAR MR. REID:

I hope the cipher explosion can be kept back till my return, as I should immensely enjoy working up a dramatic narrative, and bringing out the translations as the climax of it. Mr. Grosvenor's work in getting at the translations is splendid. The funniest of all the spectacles of the day is Marble and Tilden tied helpless to the stake while The Tribune dances around them, enjoying the protraction of their torture, before putting an end to them.

Yours truly,
J. R. G. H.

The suspense, the exposition from day to day of telegrams obviously incriminating, yet leaving their ultimate import in the air, the skilful obscuration of the wrath to come which went with the perfectly plain implication that it was only around the corner and would be implacable when it arrived—all this, indeed, was what the "co-parceners" found it hardest to bear. Also it was what was best calculated to prepare public opinion for the crucial disclosures. "He looked," says Mrs. Craigie, in one of her witty novels, speaking of a politely resigned sufferer, "he looked like St. Laurence on his gridiron, saying to his tormentors, 'Turn me. This side is done.'" The "co-parceners" were turned, over and over, before either side was really "done." And the finishing turns were given just when they were certain to do the most public good. The gridiron was put seriously on the coals, as I have shown, in August. It was red-hot and all ready for the Oregon case early in September. Brought to a white heat late in that month, it served up Florida on October 8th, an ideal date for the States which held early elections. It was, perhaps, only a coincidence that Ohio "went Republican." South Carolina had its "turn" on October 16th, with election day for most voters a good three weeks off, thus giving the lesson plenty of time in which to sink in. It sank. The November verdict registered numerous Republican victories. New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Connecticut voted, as The Tribune put it with pardonable inference, to rebuke the cipher fraud. Tammany Hall was badly beaten in New York City. There were, in short, emphatic Republican gains in all parts of the Union save the solid South. It was a triumph all along the line, and though the next Congress was to meet with the Democrats in control of both Houses, their majorities were warningly reduced. What was even more important, the elections "ended the apprehensions of those who feared the Republican party was going to pieces."

Reid had not only entertained these fears and apprehensions, but had wrestled with leaders of his party, urging them to save it from dissolution. There was pride for him in the reflection that it was his own intervention that had exerted a preservative influence upon the crisis, and, indeed, he could congratulate himself upon something more. The cipher exposures shook the country from coast to coast. Their political effect was as extensive as it was drastic. This was the really important point. The debt of public gratitude which Evarts thought so great that it would have to be funded was not, after all, so much Republican as national. "Everybody," to use his word, was bound to recognize the service that had been rendered. For it had not merely given aid and comfort to the party in power. It had pilloried once and for all the single manifestation in our annals of the idea that the presidency was a purchasable honor.

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